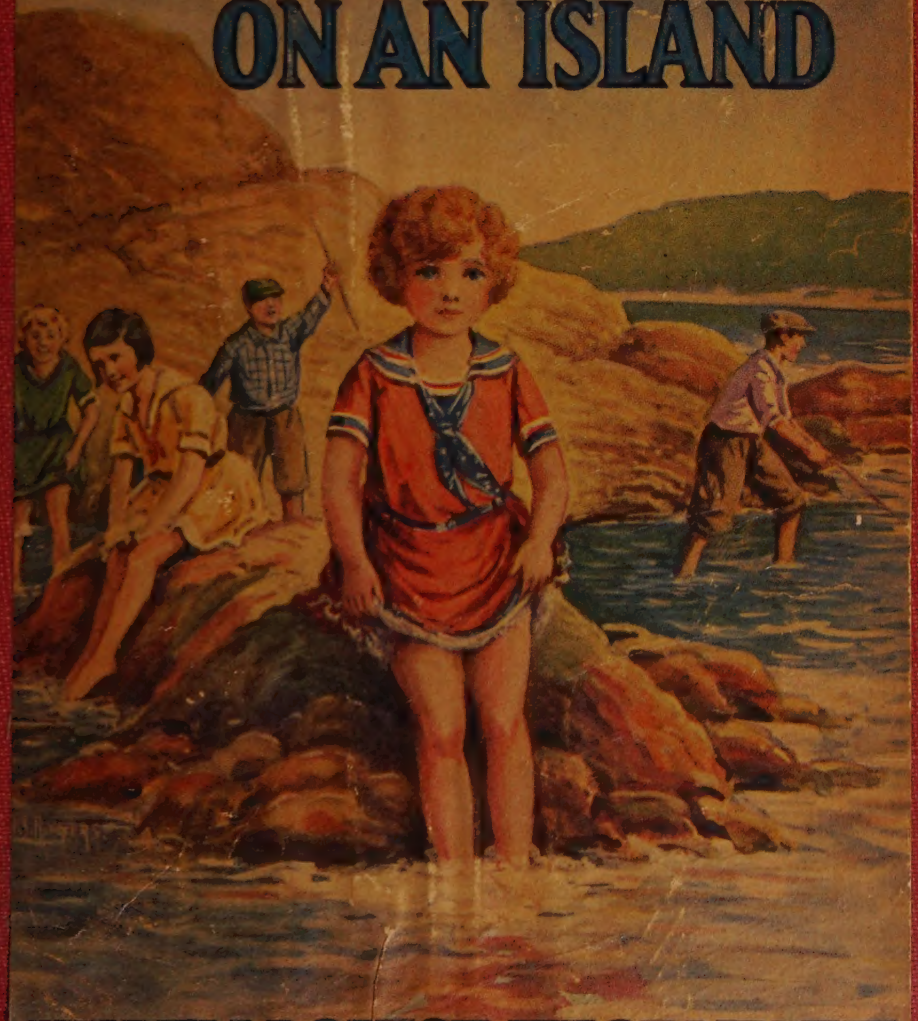
HONEY BUNCH:
HER FIRST SUMMER ON AN ISLAND



HELEN LOUISE THORNDYKE

Shirley Thompson TG

SHE PULLED HERSELF UP TO THE FLAT TOP OF THE ROCK.
Honey Bunch Her First Summer on an Island. *Frontispiece* (*Page* 124)

HONEY BUNCH:
HER FIRST SUMMER ON AN ISLAND

BY

HELEN LOUISE THORNDYKE

AUTHOR OF "HONEY BUNCH: JUST A LITTLE GIRL," "HONEY BUNCH: HER FIRST TRIP WEST," ETC.

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BY HELEN LOUISE THORNDYKE

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HONEY BUNCH: HER FIRST VISIT TO THE SEASHORE
HONEY BUNCH: HER FIRST LITTLE GARDEN
HONEY BUNCH: HER FIRST DAYS IN CAMP
HONEY BUNCH: HER FIRST AUTO TOUR
HONEY BUNCH: HER FIRST TRIP ON THE OCEAN
HONEY BUNCH: HER FIRST TRIP WEST
HONEY BUNCH: HER FIRST SUMMER ON AN ISLAND

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Honey Bunch: Her First Summer on an Island

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HONEY BUNCH: HER FIRST SUMMER ON AN ISLAND

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHY

"GRACIOUS!" said Fannie Graham, staring at Honey Bunch. "Gracious, how you do travel around! First you went to Bermuda and then you went out West and now you're going to an island!"

Honey Bunch Morton felt that perhaps Fannie didn't altogether approve of a girl who did so much traveling.

"There are islands in geography," she apologized.

Anna Martin held up the cookie she was eating.

"An island is like that hole," she declared, sticking a fat little finger through the center of the brown cookie.

"How can a hole be an island?" argued Fannie.

Honey Bunch was puzzled, too, but Anna had drawn the best paper dolls the other girls had ever seen and she could read and, dear me, she really knew a great deal. It would not be at all strange if she knew an island when she saw one and if she said an island was a hole, Honey Bunch was ready to believe it.

Mary Graham, who was Fannie's sister, bit into a cookie with great care.

"How much geography do *you* know, Honey Bunch?" she demanded.

The blue-eyed Honey Bunch looked anxious.

"I think I know some," she replied. "I didn't know an island was a hole, but I know some of the places in the geography book. The United States is pink—I know that."

Anna Martin had been nibbling her cookie without taking it from her finger and now it crumbled.

"I ate the hole," she announced calmly.

"Why is a hole an island?" persisted Fannie, who didn't believe it was any such thing.

"I never said a hole was an island," declared Anna, brushing the crumbs from her lap to the porch steps.

"I said an island is like the hole in a cookie and it is. An island is a—a—" Anna turned red, for she couldn't remember what an island was called in her cousin's geography.

Cora Williams, who had been as still as a little mouse, had a cousin in public school and she had heard him studying his lessons aloud.

"An island is a body of land surrounded by water," said Cora promptly.

"Of course it is," Anna agreed. "That's what I mean. The hole is surrounded by cookie—my goodness, I think that's awfully plain."

The other little girls stared at her, but no one liked to suggest that hole and cookie and island and bodies of water were hopelessly

mixed in their minds. Instead, Mary Graham thought it might be wiser to talk of something else.

"Where are you going, Honey Bunch?" she asked eagerly.

Honey Bunch knew that. She was sure she knew, because she had heard Mother tell Mrs. Miller only that morning.

"We're going off the New England coast," said Honey Bunch placidly.

Fannie was ready with her question then.

"How far is off?" she demanded.

Honey Bunch was puzzled. She felt herself an experienced traveler and all her friends thought so, too. Why, only that day Norman Clark, who lived on the next street but whose yard backed right into the Mortons' back yard, had come over to ask her what she thought he ought to take with him if he should happen to go to Africa to take moving pictures. Norman didn't expect to go to Africa right away, he was careful to explain, but he thought it would be nice to

know all about how to pack his trunk in case some one invited him to go.

But Honey Bunch had no way of knowing how far "off" might be. She had to tell Fannie so and that wise little chum didn't seem surprised.

"I don't suppose you do know," she said kindly. "That's because you always go to a new place, Honey Bunch. Now we go to the same seashore place every summer and I know just where it is and who keeps the store and where the new wharf is going to be built."

"Well, how do you get to an island?" asked Cora Williams.

"In a boat," Honey Bunch explained. "First we go in the car and then we take a boat. The name of the island is Cedar Point Island."

The five little girls were on the porch of the Morton house and Honey Bunch's mother had brought out the plate of cookies for them. It was a lovely afternoon and the big black

cat asleep on the porch railing did not seem to mind how much laughing and talking went on in the large swing—a swing large enough to hold five girls if they were not very fat or very tall.

"Is Lady Clare going off the coast of New England with you?" asked Cora curiously.

"My, no!" Honey Bunch answered. "Lady Clare has to stay with Mrs. Miller. A cat is a home-body and does not thank you if you take her barking."

Four pairs of eyes stared respectfully at Lady Clare. As though she knew she was the center of attention, the cat opened her sleepy green eyes and blinked at her audience drowsily.

"I don't believe cats like to bark, either," decided Fannie Graham.

"They can't bark," Honey Bunch, who knew all about cats—she knew much more about cats than she did about islands—declared hastily.

"You said you couldn't take her barking," Cora reminded her.

"I meant larking," said Honey Bunch hastily. "Mrs. Miller said larking. I think words that sound so much alike trip a body up, don't you?"

Honey Bunch was very fond of good Mrs. Miller, who came often to the house to wash and iron and clean, and she always tried to remember what Mrs. Miller said. So sometimes Honey Bunch sounded more like Mrs. Miller than like Honey Bunch Morton.

Lady Clare stretched herself and yawned. Perhaps just the word "barking" made her uneasy. Anyway, down she jumped and strolled away without as much as a farewell glance for the guests she was leaving.

Fannie Graham began to make the swing move gently.

"This is the way it feels on a boat—isn't it, Honey Bunch?" she suggested.

"A little," admitted Honey Bunch. "But sometimes it tips more and sometimes it doesn't seem to move at all. Ferryboats hardly move at all."

Honey Bunch meant that the big wide

ferryboats hardly seem to move. She had seen ferryboats and ridden on them when she was visiting her cousin in New York and of course she knew that they really do move across the river.

"I never heard of Cedar Point Island," declared Cora Williams. "How big an island is it?"

Honey Bunch was used to being asked questions. But she once told her mother that her favorite questions were those she could answer. She didn't know how large an island Cedar Point Island was, because she had never been there.

"I think it's pink, like the United States," said Honey Bunch cautiously. "Let's go in and look in the geography book, and I'll show it to you."

She led the way into the house and to the shelf which held her very own books. Honey Bunch had little thin books, and wide fat books, and some with pictures and some with none. But the geography book had the reddest of red covers and you could pick it out

from among the others without having to stop and read the title.

Honey Bunch thought that there was only one place to look at the geography book—that was on the floor. As she often explained, there was more room on the floor than anywhere else and your elbows and the elbows of all your friends, as well as all the pages of the book, had plenty of space. Besides, there was room for your feet and you couldn't slide off the chair if you got too interested in your reading, because there was no chair to slide from. Oh, the floor was much better to hold the red geography book than any other place yet invented.

"You'd better find New England first," said Fannie Graham, as soon as they were all settled on the floor, the geography book spread out before Honey Bunch.

Honey Bunch looked faintly puzzled.

"Is it separate?" she asked worriedly. "I mean, does it say New England the way the United States map does?"

Honey Bunch didn't trust her reading.

She knew the map of the United States because it was bright pink, but she was sure in her heart that if she saw the map of New England, she would never know it.

"It's a part of the United States," said Cora Williams, who was proud of her reading. She could read aloud to her grandma, if the words were not too long.

"Here it is," Mary Graham announced, turning over the pages of the book and stopping at a green map. "This is New England. It says 'M-a-s-s-a-chu-setts!'"

"Off the coast is in the water," said Anna Martin excitedly, almost falling over Cora in her eagerness to see the map.

"Here's the water," Honey Bunch pointed out, glad that she knew the ocean when she saw it.

"Yes, that's off the coast," agreed Mary Graham. "But where is Cedar Point Island?"

Honey Bunch studied the map earnestly.

"Dots are islands," she declared. "Do you see any dots?"

Cora Williams and Fannie Graham took hold of the book on one side and Anna and Mary grasped it by the other side.

"There's a dot!" they all cried. "Under your thumb, Honey Bunch!"

"That's ink," apologized Honey Bunch. "I spilled it when I was much younger. But this is a real dot, Cora—look!"

"C-e-d-a-r P-o-i-n-t I-s-l-a-n-d!" spelled out Cora. "That's it! Look, everybody, here's where Honey Bunch is going!"

Splash! Something wet and cold and slippery poured suddenly down, splashing the eager little hands and blotting out the map.

Every one scrambled to get out of the way, and Honey Bunch, glancing up, cried out in surprise:

"Why, Ida! You're spotting us."

CHAPTER II

TRAVEL PLANS

IDA CAMP blushed as bright as the map of the United States at Honey Bunch Morton's words. She was a little girl about the age of Honey Bunch, and she was carrying a tray in one hand, which really made all the trouble. Most trays, as you may know, behave much better if they are carried in two hands.

"It's cup custard," said Ida, blushing pinker than ever and almost dropping the tray itself. "My mother made six cups for us and I brought them over. I guess I tipped one of them a little bit."

The tray made an alarming leap toward Fannie Graham at that moment and she ducked hastily.

"Put it on the table!" she said anxiously. "Ida, put it on the table. You'll spill everything, if you're not careful."

"Yes, you'd better put it on the table," Cora advised. "Look out, Ida, you'll break the cups."

Honey Bunch got to her feet and took one end of the tray.

"You only dropped a little piece of one custard, Ida," she assured her chum. "I'll get Lady Clare—that can be her cup custard. Here, I'll help you put the tray on the table. I think your mother was lovely to make us something to eat."

It was as Honey Bunch had said—Ida had spilled only a little from one of the custard cups. Of course it doesn't take much custard to make a blot on a map and very little custard indeed to surprise the people who are looking at the map. But Honey Bunch called: "Here, kitty, kitty," and Lady Clare heard her and came running up the porch steps and kindly lapped up the spilled custard with a handy little pink tongue. It was, as Honey Bunch said, just enough cup custard for a cat.

Ida had brought spoons, and the little girls

sat round the table to eat their custard more daintily. While they are having such a good time, perhaps you'd like to be introduced to them, especially to Honey Bunch who, of course, has another name though her friends seldom remembered it and never tried to use it.

Well, then, this blue-eyed, yellow-haired Honey Bunch was really Gertrude Marion Morton. You may have read the first book about her and then you already know that. Perhaps you also know that her daddy started to call her "Honey Bunch" because she was so sunshiny and so sweet, and presently every one called her by that name. The title of this first book is "Honey Bunch: Just a Little Girl" and there we've explained that Honey Bunch lived in the town of Barham with the nicest of daddies and the dearest of mothers and the most good-natured of washerwomen, Mrs. Miller. Of course, Mrs. Miller didn't live in Honey Bunch's house, but she came every week to wash and clean and she took

care of Lady Clare, the handsome black cat, whenever Honey Bunch went traveling.

And Honey Bunch, as Fannie Graham said, did travel around! She went to New York to see her cousins and to the country to visit another cousin and to the seashore to play with still another cousin. Then she went camping with her mother and her daddy, and to Bermuda with them, and out to a Western ranch. You see, she was too nice a little girl to leave behind, and her daddy and mother had to travel, so Honey Bunch traveled, too. Her Western trip is described in the book just before this one and you'll agree that Honey Bunch had exciting times when we tell you that she was lost at least once—in the great Chicago railroad station—and found a new friend whom she was able to help.

Now you know something about her, and we'll go on, except that first you will want to know about Ida Camp—the little girl who brought the custards. Ida was Honey

Bunch's very best friend and lived on the same street, as did most of the girls with whom Honey Bunch played.

"That was lovely custard," said Fannie Graham, licking her spoon with more thoroughness than was strictly polite.

"Honey Bunch!" called a voice from upstairs.

"Yes, Mother!" Honey Bunch answered, running out into the hall. "Here I am, Mother."

"Time to try on your dress, dear," said Mrs. Morton.

"We have to go, anyway," Cora Williams declared. "My mother wants me to go to the store before supper."

"I have to take back the cups," said Ida Camp. "What were you hunting for in the geography book when I came in?"

They had all forgotten the geography book. The map had dried nicely and was only spotted a little—not enough to hurt any geography, Honey Bunch was sure.

"We found Cedar Point Island," explained

Honey Bunch. "Where I'm going, you know, Ida."

"Honey Bunch!" called Mrs. Morton again.

There never does seem to be a right time to try on a dress, but Honey Bunch knew that one cannot have new frocks without standing still and being measured and turned around for Mother to see how it looks in the back.

"I have to go," said Honey Bunch hastily. "I'll see you some more before we go away."

She sped upstairs and the other girls hurried down the front steps, all of them remembering things to do, it is likely.

"I've been coming, Mother," said Honey Bunch, at the door of the sewing room, "but I couldn't get off on my right foot."

Mrs. Morton laughed. She was seated at the sewing machine.

"Mrs. Miller thinks it very important to get off on the right foot, but I don't think little girls need bother their heads about such things," she said. "Isn't this a pretty frock, Honey Bunch?"

It was a pretty frock—as blue as the eyes of the little girl who was to wear it and sprinkled over with tiny pink flowers. Honey Bunch felt that she could try on a dress like that and not feel impatient if she had to stand still as long as several minutes.

She didn't have to stand still very long, however, for Mrs. Morton only wanted to measure the hem. After that Honey Bunch went downstairs to see Mrs. Miller who was ironing in the laundry. Then she went out into the yard to look at her flowers, and then it was time for Daddy Morton to come home and of course that means dinner time in almost every house.

"We found Cedar Point Island on the map, Daddy," said Honey Bunch at the dinner table. "I told the girls it was off the New England coast and we looked it up in the geography book."

"You forgot to put the geography book away," Daddy Morton reminded her. "I found it on the floor."

Honey Bunch took good care of her books

and she couldn't bear to be thought careless.

"Oh, Daddy, it was *drying!*" she explained earnestly.

"Drying?" echoed her daddy. "Why, was it wet? It looked all right to me and I closed it and put it back on your shelf."

"Ida Camp brought us some cup custards," Honey Bunch said. "Six of them on a tray —with spoons. Her mother baked them. And Ida tipped one a little and it spilled on the map, but Lady Clare ate it up and the map was just as good as ever. Only I thought it ought to get dry before I put the book back."

Mr. Morton looked as though he wanted to laugh. His eyes twinkled as he asked whether Honey Bunch thought Lady Clare could remove other spots.

"I spilled some ink on one of my handkerchiefs and Mother scolded me the other day," he said. "Perhaps Lady Clare would have licked off the ink and saved me the scolding."

"I'm astonished at you," Honey Bunch's mother declared. "I'm sure ink wouldn't be

good for Lady Clare and of course she would have too much sense to try to taste it. Instead of talking about spots, I wish you and Honey Bunch would try to think about what you want to take to the island. We can't carry too much baggage, you know."

"That reminds me," said Mr. Morton. "I brought each of you girls a present—we'll look at the packages as soon as dinner is over."

Honey Bunch dearly loved surprises and she didn't linger over the rest of her dinner, you may be sure. She ate it as quickly as was polite and danced out into the hall where surprises were usually to be found hidden under the table.

"Suitcases!" cried Honey Bunch, when her daddy had removed the paper and string from the two packages. "One for you, Mother, and one for me!"

Honey Bunch had a brown leather case with her initials stamped in gold on one end and Mrs. Morton's case was black leather with *her* initials in gold. The lining of the case Honey Bunch was to carry was blue and

Mrs. Morton's suitcase was lined with tan.

"I love to travel!" cried Honey Bunch, with a joyful bounce. "Let's begin to pack right away, Mother."

But it was bed time before they had made a beginning and it wasn't till the next morning that Honey Bunch could busy herself taking piles of clean handkerchiefs from her handkerchief box and putting them carefully into the cunning little pockets which she found in the lining of her new brown suitcase.

She could really do a great deal of her own packing without help, and she worked busily till after luncheon. Then Ida Camp came over to see her and they went out on the back porch to talk, because Honey Bunch was wearing her third best shoes and the back yard is the place for your third best shoes.

"Where are your other shoes?" asked Ida, when this was explained to her.

"My best new shoes are waiting to be packed," said Honey Bunch, "and my second best shoes are waiting for me to wear them

in the car when we go away. I have on my third best ones and my fourth best ones are getting mended so I can wear them in the wet sand."

"Oh!" said Ida Camp.

She and Honey Bunch sat down on the top step of the back porch. Hardly had they seated themselves when a screen door slammed so sharply it made them jump.

"Whose door was that?" asked Ida, looking at all the back doors she could see.

"If the fence shakes it was Norman Clark's back door," said Honey Bunch.

The fence between the Morton yard and the yard which joined it at the foot of the lot began to sway alarmingly.

"I thought it sounded like Norman Clark's screen door," remarked Honey Bunch, watching with interest a tan shoe that was waving wildly above the fence line.

The owner of the tan shoe presently came into view and a small boy settled himself comfortably on the top railing.

"Hello!" called Norman Clark, grinning.

"I heard you are going off the coast of New England, Honey Bunch."

"Yes," and Honey Bunch nodded. "Yes, we are, Norman."

"Are you going in a boat?" asked Norman. "Why did your father leave the car at the garage on the next street if you're going in a boat? Are you going to stay all summer? Is Lady Clare going with you? Will there be any children to play with on the island? Do they have a fire department up there? When did you say you are going? How long does it take to get there?"

Honey bunch never even blinked. She was used to Norman Clark, for she had known him a long time. He could ask more questions than any boy in Barham, so people said, and Mrs. Miller always added that for her part she thought a boy who lived on a back fence must be queer. Only, as Honey Bunch pointed out to her, Norman didn't really live on the back fence—he lived in a house with his father and mother.

"Daddy says," reported Honey Bunch pa-

tiently, "that we have to go in the car till we come to the seashore. He left the car at the garage to have the oil changed, I think. After we get to the seashore we leave the car and go on a boat and stay on it till we come to Cedar Point Island."

"I think you have a lot of fun," said Norman rather wistfully.

"I'll bring you something," Honey Bunch promised.

She was the most generous of little girls and she always brought little gifts home to the boys and girls she knew, so that they might remember her travels as pleasantly as she did.

"Well—all right," said Norman. "Don't forget."

Ida Camp looked at him severely.

"Honey Bunch never forgets," she declared. "She always brings us something when she says she will. My mother says she should think Mrs. Morton would get tired of buying presents for all the children in the neighborhood."

"I think it's nice," said Norman hastily. "If I ever go away, I will bring you something, Honey Bunch."

Honey Bunch told him she knew he would and Norman changed the subject by asking her when she was going.

Honey Bunch held up four slim little fingers.

"To-day," she counted, folding down one finger. "To-morrow—" another finger was folded down. "The next day—it's the day that comes after to-morrow, Norman."

"Listen to that dog bark!" said Ida suddenly. "It sounds like the police dog on the next block. If I ever met that police dog out without his master, I'd run."

"I wouldn't," Norman boasted. "I'd walk right up to him and pat him."

"Oh-h, he's the biggest dog I ever saw, Norman," protested Honey Bunch. "I wouldn't dare pat him."

"Let's go and see what he is barking at," Norman suggested. "Maybe it isn't the police dog."

But it was, and as soon as Honey Bunch saw him, she saw something else, and she darted down the steps of the front porch, forgetting to be afraid of the huge dog.

"He's chasing Lady Clare!" cried Honey Bunch, in great distress.

Ida Camp began to cry.

"He'll bite Honey Bunch!" she sobbed. "Norman, the police dog will bite Honey Bunch."

CHAPTER III

LADY CLARE'S ADVENTURE

NORMAN might have been perfectly willing to walk up to the dog and pat him, but it was evident that he did not want to pat him too suddenly. While he was thinking it over, quick little Honey Bunch had run down the steps and crossed the pavement to the tall straight elm tree that grew between the stone walk and the curb.

"Better keep away from that dog, little girl," said the driver of a laundry wagon who was waiting while his helper delivered a package to the next-door house.

The police dog was barking loudly and steadily. He stood on his hind legs, with his forefeet planted against the trunk of the tree. He was staring into the branches and high above his head. Lady Clare was clinging

desperately to the bark of the tree. She was looking down at the dog and she was frightened. Honey Bunch could see that she was frightened.

"It's my cat," explained Honey Bunch to the laundry-wagon driver. "He chased my cat up the tree."

"Well, dogs like to chase cats," the driver said, smiling. "You mustn't blame them for that, because they just can't help it. As soon as the dog goes away, your cat will climb down again."

Honey Bunch looked doubtfully at the dog. He was barking like a machine—just as loudly and regularly as when he had first started. Apparently he was never going to get out of breath.

"You kids take my advice and keep away from that dog," said the laundry-wagon driver, as his helper came back to the wagon and climbed in. "Never bother a dog when he's chasing something. He'll forget the cat by and by and go away and then you'll be all right."

"SHE MIGHT FALL DOWN," HONEY BUNCH WORRIED.

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He drove off and Honey Bunch and Ida and Norman were left alone with the barking dog.

"Don't be afraid, Lady Clare," called Norman loudly. "Nothing will hurt you."

"She might fall down," Honey Bunch worried.

"Cat's don't fall down," asserted Norman. "She's all right. Let's go up on the porch and wait for the dog to go away, though of course I am not afraid of that dog!"

Honey Bunch remembered her third best shoes and that she wasn't supposed to be wearing them where people dressed in their best clothes might be passing by at any moment.

"I'll wait on the porch a little while," she agreed. "But if that dog doesn't go away pretty soon, I'll telephone Daddy and he'll come and make him go away."

"I think you ought to get the fire department," said Ida Camp, as they sat down on the top step.

Ida was a very quiet child and her friends

were always surprised when she made a suggestion of any kind. But to suggest getting the fire department would have been a surprise, no matter who said it.

"We're not on fire," expostulated Honey Bunch.

"No. But there was a piece in the paper once," Ida began to explain. "My mother read it aloud to me. A lady had a cat, and a dog chased it up into a tree and it wouldn't come down. It stayed in the tree for three days and three nights and it meowed all the time. The lady sent for the fire department at last and they brought their hook-and-ladder and a fireman went up the ladder and brought the cat down."

"Say, that must have been kind of fun," said Norman, much interested. "Let's send for the fire department, Honey Bunch! You can telephone."

Honey Bunch hesitated.

"But the driver said Lady Clare would come down her own self when the dog goes away."

"He probably doesn't know much about cats," said Norman. "I suppose Lady Clare will stay up in that tree for a week."

Honey Bunch looked ready to cry.

"She can't stay up there for a week," she declared. "We have to go to Cedar Point Island the day after to-morrow. We can't go away and leave Lady Clare in a tree. She has to stay with Mrs. Miller."

"Then you'd better send for the fire department," insisted Norman, "and tell them to bring their hook-and-ladder."

Ida, though it was her idea, wasn't sure the fire department was really what they needed.

"You'd better ask your mother," she said to Honey Bunch.

Now, that is always good advice to follow and Honey Bunch went upstairs to ask her mother whether she should ask the fire department to bring the hook-and-ladder and rescue Lady Clare from the top of the elm tree.

"Send for the fire department!" echoed Mrs. Morton, in great astonishment. "My

dear little girl! Why, we don't need any fire department to get Lady Clare down from a tree. I'll go out and talk to her."

Mrs. Morton was busy sorting piles of clean clothes, but she left them and went downstairs with Honey Bunch. Ida and Norman were waiting, and they both seemed a little disappointed when they heard that there was to be no fire department dashing down the street with its ringing of bells and blowing of whistles.

"So that's the noise I've been hearing so long, is it?" said Mrs. Morton when she saw the police dog. "I was so busy packing I couldn't think about the noise. I only knew that some kind of racket was going on and I wished it would stop."

Mrs. Morton, followed by the three children, went down the steps. She did not pat the dog, but she went quite close to him and spoke to him sternly.

"You go home," she said. "You go straight home and stay there. I'm surprised at you!"

Honey Bunch was surprised, too. For the dog stopped barking and stared at Mrs. Morton. He looked exactly as though he were asking, "What did you say?"

"Go home!" said Honey Bunch's mother quietly. "Go straight home. You can't come here and frighten our cat."

The big police dog dropped his forefeet and stared again at Mrs. Morton. She pointed up the street.

"Go home!" she said again.

The dog turned and walked away slowly. Twice he turned and looked over his shoulder, but each time Mrs. Morton said, "Go home!" and pointed ahead with her finger. The dog went on and at the corner he turned up the other street and disappeared.

"Now Lady Clare will come down!" said Honey Bunch, with great satisfaction.

But Lady Clare didn't come down!

Mrs. Morton coaxed her and called to her. Honey Bunch called her. Norman and Ida took turns calling. Then Mrs. Miller came

out with a little saucer of boiled liver, which was the food Lady Clare liked best of all, and held it up for Lady Clare to see.

Still the cat wouldn't come down.

Mrs. Farriday, who lived on one side of the Morton house, came out and called to Lady Clare and coaxed her to come down. Then Mrs. Perkins, who lived on the other side of the Mortons, came out of her house and called to Lady Clare. There was a small crowd around the tree and every one there was calling as nicely as possible to Lady Clare, but the big black cat had been badly frightened and she would not move.

"She keeps going higher and higher," sighed Honey Bunch. "Oh, Mother, suppose she stays up in the tree for three days and three nights, like the cat Ida's mother read about in the paper! What shall we do, Mother?"

"Our cat won't stay three days in any tree," Mrs. Morton declared. "We'll wait till Daddy comes; he will know what to do."

So, finally, every one went home to get

dinner, or to run errands for their mothers so the mothers could get dinner, and Honey Bunch and Mrs. Miller waited for Mr. Morton. Mrs. Miller was almost as fond of Lady Clare as Honey Bunch was, and she said she couldn't eat a mouthful of supper until she knew the cat was safely on the ground again.

"Daddy!" cried Honey Bunch, running to the front door as soon as she heard her daddy's step. "Daddy, Lady Clare is up in the top of the tree and Mrs. Miller can't eat a mouthful of food. Neither can I, Daddy."

"Gracious!" Mr. Morton exclaimed. "What am I going to do with these fat cream puffs I brought home?"

Honey Bunch loved nice fat cream puffs and her daddy knew that.

"I can eat them after Lady Clare is out of the tree," Honey Bunch decided.

"You'd better see what you can do, David," said Mrs. Morton, coming out of the kitchen with cheeks as pink as the apron she wore to cover her pretty dress. "The whole neighborhood has been upset this afternoon. That

police dog who lives over on the next block chased Lady Clare up the elm tree."

"Ida wanted the fire department and so did Norman," added Honey Bunch.

"It's lucky I came home, then," Mr. Morton said, his eyes twinkling. "I don't know what Norman and the fire department together might do to the house, but I would hate to find them both here at once."

Honey Bunch and her mother and Mrs. Miller watched from the doorway while Mr. Morton went out and looked up into the tree. They heard him call to Lady Clare softly, but the cat evidently would not listen to him, either.

"I can get her!" said Honey Bunch's daddy, coming back to the house. "I can get Lady Clare, all right, but I'll have to have a piece of rope and a crab net. Isn't there a crab net in the attic, Edith?"

Mrs. Morton said yes, but before they could go upstairs, Norman Clark had come up the steps and was peering through the screen door at them.

"Shall I send for the fire department?" he asked.

Mr. Morton groaned and Honey Bunch chuckled.

"Daddy is going to get Lady Clare," she informed Norman. "He is going to get her with a piece of rope and a crab net."

"Let me help?" Norman asked. "Want me to climb the tree, Mr. Morton? Shall I get my hatchet?"

"Listen to me," said Mr. Morton. "I don't mind an audience at this rescue—I hereby invite you all to come up to the attic to watch me rescue a poor defenseless cat. But if any one tries to help me or says a word before I have finished, I'll put him in the crab net and hang him out of the window."

Dear me, this was dreadful to think of, and even Norman, who had "to talk or burst," Mrs. Miller said—even Norman promised not to say a single word.

They all went up into the attic, which was warm from the afternoon sun, in spite of the three windows that were open.

CHAPTER IV

HONEY BUNCH STARTS

As soon as Honey Bunch saw her daddy go to one of the front windows of the attic, she thought she knew what he meant to do.

"The tree comes right up to the window," she whispered to Norman. "Maybe Lady Clare can come in the window."

Now, that is just what Lady Clare could have done and just what she would have done, if she had not been so badly frightened. But the police dog had scared her worse than she had ever been scared before in all her life. Lady Clare was too frightened to *think,* she could only dig her claws into the bark of the tree to keep herself from falling. She couldn't go forward or back, nor even listen when her friends called her. She was too afraid to move.

Through the window Honey Bunch could see, after her daddy had taken out the screen, that the cat was on the limb nearest the window. It wasn't quite as high as the window, but it was almost as high.

This was the reason her daddy had wanted the rope, Honey Bunch soon discovered. Mr. Morton made a loop in one end of the rope and threw it until it caught in one of the heavy branches. He had to throw it four times, before he could do this.

"Stand back from the window," he said quickly. "Be ready to hand me the net, Edith."

Honey Bunch's mother had found the crab net, hanging on the wall, and she held it ready.

While the children and Mrs. Miller watched breathlessly, Mr. Morton pulled on his rope and that lifted higher the limb on which Lady Clare was sitting, so that she was on a level with the window.

"Now!" he said.

Mrs. Morton passed him the crab net and Mr. Morton took it and dropped it over Lady Clare's head and body.

Before that astonished cat realized what Honey Bunch's daddy was doing, he had pulled her (spitting and scratching and clawing like a little fury!) up over the limb, over the window sill, and down on to the floor of the attic.

Oh, my, my, perhaps Lady Clare wasn't mad! She was the maddest cat you ever saw. She never stopped to think that she might have had to stay in that tree all night if Mr. Morton had not rescued her. No, Lady Clare couldn't think of that just yet. She shot over to one corner of the attic and hid in a corner behind a trunk.

"I think her feelings are hurt," said Honey Bunch.

"Never mind, darling, she will be all right by and by," Mrs. Morton answered. "We'll go down and have dinner and after that I think Lady Clare will be feeling much better."

"Could you eat a mouthful of food now, Mrs. Miller?" asked Honey Bunch very politely.

Mrs. Miller said she could, and in fact she was so hungry she stayed for dinner instead of going home to her own house, and she washed the dishes for Honey Bunch's mother, and that was very nice.

As for Norman, he went home, because his mother sent for him and he said that, anyway, he thought it would have been more exciting if the Mortons had sent for the fire department.

Honey Bunch and her mother went up to see Lady Clare again that night and found her ready to be friends again. She purred for them and drank the milk they brought her, and when Ida Camp ran over just before bed time to ask if she was still in the tree, there was Lady Clare sitting on the living room couch and looking as though she had never ruffled her fur by climbing anything.

"I'm so glad she didn't have to stay in the tree three days and three nights like the news-

paper cat," said Honey Bunch the last thing before she went to bed.

She said it the next day as soon as she woke up, and all through that busy day of packing and getting ready to go away, Honey Bunch found time to stop and hug Lady Clare and tell her how dearly she loved her.

Honey Bunch had a great deal to do, as you will understand when you hear that she was leaving all her dolls at home. Usually she took Eleanor, her favorite doll, with her. But this time she had decided that traveling was not good for her children.

"Mrs. Miller says she can't abide restless children," reported Honey Bunch, "and I wouldn't like Eleanor to grow up restless."

So Honey Bunch had to arrange her doll family as she wished them to stay while she was away, and then she had to explain to them where she was going, so they wouldn't expect her to come home too soon. She had to put more things in her beautiful new brown suitcase, too, and she trotted up and downstairs on errands for Mother and Mrs. Miller

and Daddy. Oh, a little girl can be as busy as any grown-up person when she is getting ready to go traveling.

"If Honey Bunch isn't going to take any dolls, I'm not going to take any lunch boxes," announced Mrs. Morton. "I'm tired of making sandwiches. We'll eat at some of the hotels we pass."

"I could eat a mouthful of food at a hotel," agreed Honey Bunch cheerfully.

"I think I could eat a mouthful, too," Mr. Morton decided.

Honey Bunch's mother laughed and said she didn't know what she was going to do with them.

By the time the dolls were all arranged in a neat row and everything packed that was to go and the furniture and pictures neatly covered, Mrs. Miller was ready to take Lady Clare home with her. The cat always stayed with the washerwoman when the Mortons were away, and it was hard to tell which enjoyed the visit more, Mrs. Miller or Lady Clare.

"Good-by, Lady Clare, darling," said Honey Bunch through the wicker of the basket when Lady Clare was safely fastened in. "Be a good cat and don't forget me. And don't eat Mrs. Miller's goldfish."

Lady Clare didn't say anything. It always made her a bit cross to be shut up in a basket, but that was the only way Mrs. Miller could carry her through the streets.

Mrs. Miller said good-by, though; and Honey Bunch promised to send her a post-card for her collection. Mrs. Miller saved every card Honey Bunch sent her and she kept them in a little book. She wouldn't put cards from any of her other friends in that book. She said they were her "best cards."

As soon as Mrs. Miller and Lady Clare had gone down the street, the Mortons went to bed. They were to start early in the morning and eat their breakfast at a restaurant. Mr. Morton said he thought it would be fine if they could get away as early as six o'clock.

"Don't forget to wake me up, Daddy,"

Honey Bunch cautioned him. "You might go off and forget me."

But Honey Bunch wasn't really afraid that that would happen. Her daddy usually knew where she was and it wasn't likely that he would forget the only little girl he had.

It seemed to Honey Bunch that she had been asleep a very few minutes when she felt some one shaking her gently.

"Honey, Honey Bunch!" her mother was whispering. "It's morning, darling. Daddy has already gone out to get the car."

Honey Bunch opened her blue eyes wide and remembered three pleasant things at once. That's a nice way to start a day, don't you think?

She remembered that they were to start for Cedar Point Island, that they were to have breakfast in a restuarant, and that she had a new brown leather suitcase.

"I'll put my mind on getting dressed," said Honey Bunch, tumbling out of her small white bed.

Mrs. Miller was always announcing that she meant to "put her mind" on doing some one task, and Honey Bunch had seen how hard she worked when she was putting her mind on something special.

Mrs. Morton was nearly dressed and she helped Honey Bunch, not because that little girl couldn't dress herself, for she could and nicely, but because your mother likes to look you over when you're dressing to go somewhere. Then she can be sure you have your pocket handkerchief, that your shoes are polished, and that the elastic is in the right place in your blouse.

Honey Bunch was to wear a dark blue silk dress, with bloomers to match, and a dark blue straw hat with velvet streamers. She looked ever so nice when she was dressed and her tan shoes and socks matched her new suitcase.

"I don't believe any of the other children will be up," she remarked, following her mother downstairs.

"Not as early as this," said Mrs. Morton.

"Hark—there's Daddy. Now we can close the windows and then we're through."

Honey Bunch sat down to take care of the baggage while her mother and daddy went over the house, closing windows and locking them, and locking the back and side doors. The house looked lonely already and Honey Bunch was glad when they could go out into the bright sunshine.

The car was at the curb and it took Mr. Morton only a few minutes to help Honey Bunch and her mother in, stow away their suitcases and the boxes they were taking, and then take his own place at the wheel.

"Want to eat uptown or downtown?" he asked as they glided easily away.

Honey Bunch bounced a little.

"Norman Clark loves to eat downtown, Daddy," she declared.

Daddy Morton laughed and said that settled it.

"Downtown eggs and bacon are what we need," he announced. "Mother, do you love to eat downtown?"

"At this moment I should love to eat anywhere," replied Mrs. Morton, smiling, and Honey Bunch was suddenly aware of a funny feeling inside herself.

"Did—did I eat any dinner last night, Mother?" she asked doubtfully.

"Dearest, you're hungry," said her mother. "Of course, you ate your dinner, just as you always do. But now you're ready for a nice hot breakfast."

They drove to one of the downtown restaurants and Honey Bunch told the waiter that the breakfast he brought her was the best breakfast she had ever eaten.

"Don't tell Mrs. Miller," she warned him, "because she makes us waffles sometimes and they are very good. But I think your toast with butter on it was better than chocolate ice-cream and I liked the egg in the little blue cup better than waffles."

Now, as Honey Bunch doted on waffles and chocolate ice-cream was her favorite dessert, next to charlotte russe, you can see how good that breakfast tasted to her.

She and her mother sat on the front seat with her daddy when they went back to the car. Mr. Morton had planned to drive a certain number of miles that day, stay all night at some hotel, and then drive as many miles again the next day. They would have to spend that night, too, in a hotel, he explained, and then, the morning after that, they should reach Bayport, the town from which they would take the steamer for Cedar Point Island.

"I think it will be fun to live on an island," said Honey Bunch, as the car sped along. "Will it be like Bermuda, Mother?"

"Not much like Bermuda," Mrs. Morton answered. "This island has a great many cedar trees growing on it, as you may guess from its name; the air is cooler, too. At night we'll have to use blankets to keep us warm."

Honey Bunch remembered that Bermuda is an island, and she also remembered that she had seen no cedar trees there and that the weather had been very warm during her stay there.

"I hope there will be some children to play with," she remarked hopefully.

"I have never yet seen an island," Mr. Morton declared, skillfully guiding the car around one of the great highway buses that ran from Barham to the next state, "where there were no children to play with."

"Neither have I," said Honey Bunch, after a moment's thought. "But then, I never saw any island except Bermuda."

They were outside the city limits by this time, and far ahead of the heavy bus which had to stop to pick up passengers.

Honey Bunch was watching the road ahead when she saw a little girl—no, two little girls, standing on the left hand side of the road. They looked a bit queer to her, and after she had stared at them a moment longer, Honey Bunch understood why they looked different. They were standing with their backs to the road.

As the car shot past them, they looked over their shoulders and Honey Bunch made a second discovery.

"Daddy," she said quickly, "those two little girls were crying."

Mrs. Morton looked back and Mr. Morton let the car slow down.

"Crying!" exclaimed Honey Bunch's mother sympathetically.

"Are you sure, Honey Bunch?" her daddy asked.

"They were crying tears," said Honey Bunch gravely.

"Then," said her daddy just as gravely, "there is nothing else to do but go back and ask them what the matter is."

CHAPTER V

THE JUNIOR HELPERS

MR. MORTON made sure that no cars were coming from either direction, then he backed his car, turned around, and went back to where the Morton auto had passed the two little girls.

They were standing in the same place and there was no doubt about it, they were crying. They looked up as the car came to a stop beside them, and Honey Bunch saw the great round tears sliding down their cheeks.

They were sunburned little girls, with dark eyes and hair and they looked as though they might be about ten years old. They wore no hats, but their yellow gingham dresses, made just alike, were very neat and clean. One of them held a small basket.

"Can we help you?" asked Honey Bunch's

pretty mother, leaning forward. "Has anything happened?"

"No, ma'am," said one of the girls. "That is, it's nothing you can help. Thank you just the same."

"Does your head ache?" Honey Bunch asked.

"No, ma'am," the other little girl answered.

"But you wouldn't be crying unless something was wrong," said Mrs. Morton. "We can't go on and leave you standing here in the road. You aren't lost, are you?"

"No, ma'am, we're not lost," the girl who had spoken first declared. "We live about half a mile down that side road, so we couldn't be lost. But we were going to an all-day meeting of the Junior Helpers and we—we lost our bus money and the money Pa gave us to buy ice-cream with."

Just thinking about the lost money made her cry harder than ever.

Mr. Morton knew what to do, however.

"Where is this meeting?" he asked quickly.

"It's in Pleasantdale," answered the girl who was not crying quite so hard as her sister. "That's ten miles from here. The meeting's in the town hall."

"You get in with us," Mr. Morton commanded. "We go through Pleasantdale and we'll be glad to give you a lift."

"But we haven't any money to pay you for it," said the girl slowly.

Honey Bunch saw her daddy reach back and open the rear door of the car.

"Hop into that empty seat and don't let me hear another word about money," he said, pretending to be very cross indeed. "Doesn't your father give people a lift when he meets them on the road?"

"Well, yes, he does," the girl admitted, scrambling into the car, followed by her sister. "Do you think this is just the same?"

"Why, of course," said Mrs. Morton, for Mr. Morton was busy turning the car again. "We often give people a lift. This is my little daughter, Honey Bunch Morton."

"How do you do?" Honey Bunch re-

sponded politely. "What is a Junior Helper, if you please?"

The two sisters began to talk at once.

"It's like a club," they explained. "Every county has a club and we belong to the one in our county. You're supposed to help your father and mother and you get prizes for some things. This is the annual meeting. We brought our lunch."

Then they told Honey Bunch their names —they were Letty and Laura Blackmore. They lived on a farm and helped their father and mother in the summer time and in the winter they went to school in the school bus which called for them each morning and brought them home in the afternoon.

"There goes our lunch!" shrieked Letty, as the car went over a rut and the basket began to slide toward the floor.

"Better let me hold it for you," Mrs. Morton suggested, and she took the basket and held it on her lap.

Honey Bunch thought it must be nice to be a Junior Helper. She asked a great many

questions, and Letty and Laura could answer every one of them.

"Letty is going to make a speech," said Laura. "She is a delegation from our club and she has to stand up and tell what we've been doing at the meetings for a whole year."

"I wouldn't like to be a delegation," Honey Bunch decided hastily.

"I don't mind," said Letty. "I like to make speeches."

Then Honey Bunch asked a question which she had been anxious to ask ever since the girls had stepped into the car.

"How did you lose your money?" asked Honey Bunch.

"I had it in an envelope," Laura explained. "There were three quarters—twenty cents each way for the bus, and fifteen cents apiece for ice-cream, and five cents left over for candy."

"And the money made a hole in the envelope and dropped out," Letty added sorrowfully.

Honey Bunch tried to add up on her fin-

gers and had to stop. Arithmetic was, she decided, "rather hard."

"Where is the town hall?" asked Mr. Morton, over his shoulder.

They were coming to Pleasantdale and the country was melting into shady streets and houses with yards around them, instead of open fields and widely scattered buildings.

"You just keep going straight ahead," directed Letty. "It's on the main street. You'll know it because it has a white tower and there will be a crowd out in front."

Sure enough, in another moment, Honey Bunch saw a red brick building with a tower painted white. There were groups of people standing about on the lawn, most of whom seemed to be girls about the age of Letty and Laura.

"Don't you want to come in and hear the program?" said Letty, as Mr. Morton stopped the car at the curb.

"Yes, we'd be pleased to have you," chimed in Laura primly.

Honey Bunch was wondering if all the

girls she saw scattered over the lawn were "Junior Helpers," but she heard her mother say they would not have time to attend the meeting.

Laura and Letty stepped out and took their basket Mrs. Morton handed them.

"Thank you ever so much for bringing us," they said together. Honey Bunch waved to them until the town hall was out of sight and then she remembered something.

"It's too bad they haven't any money for ice-cream and how will they get home?" she said anxiously.

"Ask Mother," Mr. Morton replied, his eyes laughing at her.

"How will they, Mother?" asked Honey Bunch, not quite so anxiously, for if her mother already knew the answer, there was nothing left for a little girl to worry about.

"Well, Honey Bunch," said Mrs. Morton, "I really think Laura and Letty would find it easy to get home—probably some of their neighbors are at the meeting and would gladly take them home with them; but, in

case this didn't happen, and also so that Laura and Letty might be able to buy ice-cream, I put a dollar bill in the basket where they'll be sure to find it as soon as they start to eat their sandwiches."

Honey Bunch gave a little bounce—she always bounced when she was pleased.

"Isn't that lovely!" she cried. "Now they can be a delegation and eat ice-cream and everything!"

"I'm not a delegation," said her daddy mournfully, "but I'm so hungry! Do you think it is too early to begin to think about lunch?"

Mrs. Morton said no, she thought it was a very nice time to begin to think about lunch and Honey Bunch was perfectly willing to think, too.

But, though they watched carefully, there did not seem to be any inns or hotels which looked very inviting as they passed. They didn't look clean, said Honey Bunch's mother, and her daddy said he wasn't hungry enough to eat where the flies were also hav-

ing lunch, and Honey Bunch didn't like the farmhouses because most of them had pigs in the yard.

"And I do think," remarked this small girl critically, "that pigs should be kept in the back, by the barn."

Finally, though, as they grew hungrier and hungrier, they all decided that the next place they came to where meals were served or there was food for sale, they would stop.

"No matter what kind of a place it is," said Mr. Morton.

"Even if there are pigs in the yard," Honey Bunch agreed, her blue eyes searching the road ahead hopefully. It would be so much nicer to find a place where the pigs were in the back.

The car turned a curve in the road and Honey Bunch began to giggle. Then her daddy laughed and Mrs. Morton laughed, also.

For there was a small roadside stand in which fresh vegetables were displayed for sale and nothing else.

"Nice potatoes?" called a freckled-faced boy, as he saw the car slow down.

"We want something ready to eat," Mr. Morton explained. "Isn't there any place around here where we can get a good hot lunch?"

"Sure!" replied the boy. "Just turn up that lane. My married sister lives in that house and she always has dinner ready at twelve o'clock."

"Perhaps she won't want company for lunch," Mrs. Morton suggested.

"Viny will be tickled to see you," declared the boy.

Honey Bunch was sure she had never been so hungry in her life before. And when her daddy drove up to the white gate before a white house and a young woman in a blue dress and a white apron came hurrying out, she didn't have to look twice to know that there were no pigs in that yard.

"Your brother seemed to think you might take us in for lunch," said Mr. Morton a little uncertainly.

"What a darling little girl!" the young woman exclaimed, smiling at Honey Bunch. "Why, of course you're welcome to have dinner with us; that is, if you don't mind eating in the kitchen. You'll have to be part of the family, because I've already got the table laid."

My, my, Honey Bunch thought that being "part of the family" was probably one of the nicest things that could happen. For Mrs. Hunter—she told them her name as she led them up the garden path and in at the kitchen door—had nine in her family already, and with the three Mortons, that made twelve to sit down to the large table.

Honey Bunch had to sit on three heavy books—a dictionary, a "wild animal book," and a book that told you how to cure sick horses and cows—before her chin showed above the tablecloth. All the others were grown-ups.

But the "lunch" that was "dinner" was something to remember! Mrs. Hunter seemed to think they had had nothing to eat

for weeks and weeks and she kept asking them to have more, and Mr. Hunter, who said nothing at all, kept helping Honey Bunch to everything that he could reach.

When dinner was over and Mr. Morton said they must go, in order to make Coleville that night, Mr. Hunter spoke for the first time. Neither he nor his wife wanted payment for the dinner—they said guests were always welcome in their house—but Mr. Morton insisted and handed over two dollars.

"There's only one thing we really want," said this silent Mr. Hunter, "and that's a little girl with blue eyes; I don't suppose you'd let us keep this one?"

As of course no daddy could lend or give away his little girl, Mr. Morton said he was sorry, but there was only one Honey Bunch and he just had to have her.

"You have the potato boy," said Honey Bunch shyly. "He's nice."

CHAPTER VI

JIM AND JANET

THE Mortons saw the "potato boy" as they drove out of the lane. Honey Bunch asked him anxiously when he was going to get something to eat, and he said that his brother-in-law would come down and take charge of the stand while he went to the house to have his dinner.

"I like traveling," remarked Honey Bunch, settling back in the seat and resting her head against her mother's shoulder.

For perhaps an hour or more, she watched the fields slip by, saw a big hawk in the sky circling over some farmer's chicken yard, and even began to count the mail boxes they passed. But the fields and the sky and the mail boxes got dreadfully mixed after a while and when her daddy spoke to her mother, his voice sounded very far away.

Honey Bunch meant to prop her eyes open with her fingers, but before she could raise her hands her eyelids were shut tight and when she opened them again, she saw little lights twinkling ahead.

"You've had a splendid nap, dear," said Mrs. Morton. "We're coming to Coleville now and we'll have supper and go to bed early."

Honey Bunch was wide awake by the time they stopped before an odd-looking building which seemed to have been built at the top of a great many steps. They were steep steps, too, as Honey Bunch and her mother found when they started to climb them. There were three sets of these steps and when they reached the front porch and turned to look down, Honey Bunch felt that it would not be much fun to roll down them.

"You've just escaped the storm," said a large, stout woman, coming to the door. "Walk right in. Do you want you should stay all night?"

Mrs. Morton said yes, and explained that

her husband had taken the car around to the garage.

"Supper will be ready in fifteen minutes," said the woman. "Dora, take this lady up to number twenty-seven."

Dora, a tall, lanky girl, blushing bright red, came out from behind a little desk and started up the stairs.

Mrs. Morton and Honey Bunch followed her and she showed them into a large, square room with the bed in the middle of the floor and chairs arranged stiffly against the walls.

"If—if—just ring the bell if you need anything," said Dora, blushing redder than ever.

"Mother," Honey Bunch said, as soon as the door had closed, "do you want I should raise the window?"

"Oh, Honey Bunch," sighed Mrs. Morton, "try not to talk like every one you hear—there's Daddy knocking at the door."

A few minutes later a great gong sounded through the house and Honey Bunch at first thought there must be a fire. But it was only the signal that supper was ready.

Down in the dining room they found Dora, who was waiting on the tables. She led them to a small square table close by a window and without saying a word brought in the supper.

Honey Bunch looked around her as she ate. She hoped to find some girls or boys, but apparently only grown-up folk stopped at this hotel. However, she felt something rub against her legs and, looking down, discovered a big gray cat.

"How did he get in here?" said Dora, when she saw him. "He must have sneaked in when I was bringing the hot rolls."

"What is his name?" asked Honey Bunch.

"Henry Peter," Dora answered. "He's awfully lazy—he eats too much."

"I think you're beautiful," whispered Honey Bunch to Henry Peter.

She was afraid his feelings had been hurt by Dora's frank remarks and after supper, when Mrs. Morton said they might sit on the porch for half an hour or so before they went to bed, Honey Bunch held Henry Peter and rocked him and told him all about Lady

Clare and especially about the police dog that had chased her up into the elm tree.

Honey Bunch found a nice little cot waiting for her when she went up to bed with her mother. Mrs. Morton laughed because the cot was also standing in the middle of the floor.

"Dora told me that the owner of the house read somewhere that a free circulation of air helps us to sleep," said Mrs. Morton. "Honey Bunch, I think we're going to have free circulation of air."

Perhaps that was the reason Honey Bunch slept all night long without waking. She woke to find the sun shining, her daddy dressed and gone, and her mother talking to Henry Peter who was sitting on the window sill, outside the screen.

"He climbed up the wistaria vine," Mrs. Morton explained. "I think he must have been looking for you, Honey Bunch."

Honey Bunch raised the screen and Henry Peter came in and went to sleep on the floor

in a patch of sunshine while she dressed. He also followed her down to the dining room. Dora said that was strange because, as a rule, Henry Peter didn't pay any attention to strangers.

"He knows I have a cat at home," said Honey Bunch confidently.

After breakfast, Mr. Morton brought the car around and Honey Bunch said good-by to Henry Peter and she and her mother went down those three sets of steep steps. Honey Bunch felt exactly as though she might tumble on her nose any minute, but she didn't.

"Now where are we going, Daddy?" she asked, as soon as she was settled nicely in the car.

"You and Mother look at the map and tell me," suggested Mr. Morton.

So Honey Bunch and her mother put their heads together over the road map and Mrs. Morton showed Honey Bunch where Bayport was and the roads they might follow to come to it.

"We'll spend the night in Showers, I think," said Mrs. Morton. "There is said to be a very good hotel there."

"What a funny name," Honey Bunch commented. "And, oh, Mother, where was the storm?"

Mrs. Morton asked, "What storm?" and Honey Bunch reminded her that the large stout woman had said to them they were just in time to escape the storm.

"Did we escape it, Mother?" asked Honey Bunch.

"It escaped us," Mrs. Morton said. "I saw a few flashes of lightning after we were in bed and you were asleep, but there was no rain."

"I think we'll not escape it much longer, though," said Honey Bunch's daddy. "The sky looks to me as though there might be a few wet hours in store for us. I would like to get through before the roads have a chance to get muddy."

Honey Bunch looked at the sky but as far as she could tell it looked as the sky always

did. However, she knew that her daddy was a pretty good weather prophet, and she was glad to remember that her little umbrella which folded up and her oil skin hat and slicker were safely tucked away under the rear seat.

They had lunch at one of the road stands, because Mr. Morton was anxious to reach Showers as soon as possible, and you can really eat very quickly at a road-side stand. Honey Bunch thought it was more fun than eating in a hotel, but then she admitted that she would not want to eat *all* the time from a little booth painted pink and green.

The sun was still shining when they drove into Showers which, in spite of its name, seemed to be an up-to-date and thriving small town. There were two hotels, and both Honey Bunch and her mother liked the one with the wide porch better than the one with a smaller porch but with a whole string of white-shaded lamp posts leading up to the front door.

The instant they entered the hotel with the

wide porch, Honey Bunch learned something pleasant. There would be some children to play with!

On a rug in the hall was a toy horse and wagon, and a train of cars, with paper dolls sitting in the cars, was strung half way across one of the stair steps.

Honey Bunch beamed delightedly. But she went across the hall and picked up the train of cars.

"Mrs. Carroll says never leave your toys on the stairs," said Honey Bunch seriously, "because her second cousin tripped on a wooden doll and broke her elbow."

"Thank you very much for picking them up," said the young man at the desk. "I'll speak to Jim and Janet."

"Where are they?" asked Honey Bunch, looking eagerly around.

"I think they've gone for the mail, but they'll be back soon," said the young man, handing a pen to Mr. Morton, who wrote down their names in the heavy book in which all the guests' names were kept.

The young man seemed to have a great deal to do, for he carried up their bags and unlocked their room for them and promised to send a girl with fresh towels. Honey Bunch liked him, because he seemed so cheerful.

"Are Jim and Janet his little boy and girl?" she asked her mother, after the young man had gone back to his desk.

Mrs. Morton was getting out a clean dress for Honey Bunch to wear.

"Oh, no, he's too young to be their daddy, dear," said Mrs. Morton. "He may be an older brother or an uncle or no relation at all. Do you want to go down and wait on the porch for Mother and Daddy, Honey Bunch?"

Honey Bunch thought she would. She was eager to see Jim and Janet and to get acquainted with them.

"Hello!" said the young man, as soon as he saw her coming down the stairs. "Here are some people who would like to meet you."

A little dark-haired girl and a red-headed boy were standing before the desk.

"This," said the young man, "is Honey Bunch Morton. Miss Honey Bunch, this is my niece Janet, and my nephew, Jim. I've already told them about Mrs. Carroll who broke her elbow by stumbling over a wooden doll."

"Mrs. Carroll didn't break her elbow," Honey Bunch corrected him gravely. "It was her second cousin."

Jim and Janet stared at her for a moment and then they smiled.

"Come out on the porch and let's play ball," they suggested.

When her mother and daddy came downstairs, Honey Bunch was having a wonderful time, trying to roll a rubber ball into a cup-shaped pocket at the other end of the porch.

"Supper is ready," said Mr. Morton. "The dining-room doors have just been opened. Aren't you hungry, Honey Bunch?"

"A little," Honey Bunch admitted. "Daddy, this is Janet Mansion and her brother Jim."

Janet giggled.

"My name isn't Mansion," she said. "It's Cross—Janet Cross."

"Oh," murmured Honey Bunch. "Daddy said this was the Mansion House, and I thought you lived in it——"

"That's just a name," explained the red-headed Jim. "Anyway, we live here only during the summer. Let's go have supper."

Honey Bunch played with Janet and Jim till bed time and after she was in bed she dreamed that she was throwing the rubber ball to Janet. She saw Janet miss it and it must have hit something, for there was a loud crash and Honey Bunch found herself sitting up in bed, saying:

"Mother! What was that?"

CHATPER VII

BAYPORT

BEFORE her mother could answer her question Honey Bunch knew what had awakened her. It was thunder, and a second clap sounded just over her head while a flash of lightning made the room for half a second as bright as day.

"Oh, my!" said Honey Bunch.

Bang! Bang! Bang! All around sounded the crash of windows being put down hastily. None too soon, either, for a downpour of rain drummed on the tin roofs and began to rattle against the glass.

"All water-tight," sounded Mr. Morton's voice cheerfully in the darkness. "Want a light, Edith?"

"Oh, no, this won't last long," Honey Bunch's mother replied serenely. "You don't want a light, do you, Honey Bunch?"

"Not right away," said Honey Bunch. "But could I sleep with you, Mother?"

For answer her daddy came and lifted her out of the cot and carried her over to the big bed and put her down beside her mother, and in less than three minutes Honey Bunch was sound asleep and never knew when the storm passed nor heard her daddy put the windows up again.

"Did you hear it thunder in the night?" asked Janet the next morning, when Honey Bunch came down to breakfast.

"I woke up," Honey Bunch answered, "but I didn't stay woke up."

"Lots of people did," said Janet. "My father lighted the parlor and some of the people dressed and came down and sat on the sofas and chairs. But I didn't even wake up. Jim told me this morning."

Honey Bunch didn't like to have to say good-by to Janet and Jim, but her daddy told her that perhaps they would come home the same way and that made her feel more cheerful.

After they were once more on the road, speeding toward Bayport, Honey Bunch began to watch for the ocean, though they were still miles from it, and that kept her busy.

The storm the night before had been brief, but heavy, and the Mortons found that limbs from many trees had been blown down into the road. They saw, also, two trees that had been struck by lightning.

"I think we're going straight into another storm," announced Mr. Morton, glancing at the sky after they had been driving several hours. "If that wind is coming off the sea, there'll be a pretty heavy surf."

"I hope we'll make the afternoon steamer," Mrs. Morton said, a little anxiously. "The Ryders will be excepting us."

Honey Bunch opened her eyes as wide as possible at this.

"Oh-h-oh!" she stuttered.

"Oh-oh!" her mother mimicked her, smiling. "I've spoiled the surprise, haven't I, dear? I meant to wait until we stepped off

the boat and let you see the Ryders and the Pattersons for yourself."

Honey Bunch couldn't help bouncing.

"Is it the Ryders I know, Mother?" she asked eagerly. "And the same Pattersons?"

Her mother looked at her daddy and they both laughed.

"You don't know the Ryders, dearie," said Mrs. Morton. "You've only seen the pictures I have of them. And the Pattersons, too. But they will all be at the island. Isabel Ryder wrote me about the bungalow next to theirs and that really decided us. Daddy and I thought we'd keep it a secret, especially after we saw how anxious you were to find some children on the island to play with this summer."

Honey Bunch hardly knew when they stopped for a hurried lunch. She was thinking about the Ryders and the Pattersons. As her mother had said, she had never seen them, but they were two sisters (that is, Mrs. Ryder and Mrs. Patterson were sisters) who

had gone to school with her mother and had grown up and married and now had daughters of their own. Aunt Isabel Ryder, as Honey Bunch had been taught to call the smiling photograph her mother often showed her, had three small girls, two older than Honey Bunch and one about her age; and Aunt Eva Patterson had three sons and a daughter. Honey Bunch didn't know how old they were.

"I think it will be lovely on Cedar Point Island," she announced.

The rain began to spatter down about two o'clock in the afternoon and an hour later had settled down into a steady deluge. Mr. Morton had to stop the car once or twice to wipe the mist from the wind-shield, for the little mechanical wiper that clicked busily back and forth couldn't work as fast as the rain drops fell.

"There's a high wind," said Honey Bunch's daddy soberly, as he drew back into the car after having rubbed a cloth over the

outside of the wind-shield. "I don't know about taking the steamer, Edith."

"But is there any place to stay in Bayport?" Mrs. Morton asked.

"Oh, there are sure to be hotels and boarding places—it's a beach resort," replied Mr. Morton, and then a gust of wind blew the rain against the windows of the car and Mrs. Morton said she would rather spend the night on the mainland and take the steamer in the morning.

Honey Bunch was cramped from staying so long in one position and she was glad to climb down when her daddy stopped the car under the roof of a side porch of a hotel. It was impossible not to see that the roof leaked, for the rain was coming through in several places and the steps of the porch were almost as wet as though they had been exposed to the full force of the storm. It was so wet that Honey Bunch didn't miss the ocean, though she had meant to look for it the first thing.

"There's a nice fire in the hall," said an old man, coming out to take their bags. "You can dry off alongside of that."

There was a fine wood fire blazing in the brick fireplace in the wide hall and a number of empty rocking chairs drawn up before it.

"Most of the guests have gone to a fair today," said the hostess, who had white hair and a pleasant voice and who seemed glad to see them. "It's a miserable day out, but nice in the fire-hall where the fair is being held."

She took her guests upstairs to a blue and white room and Honey Bunch saw the ocean the moment she looked out of the window. It might be said to be in the back yard of the "Bay View," which was the name of the hotel where they were.

"Could I go down and look around, Mother?" asked Honey Bunch eagerly. "I would rather look around than dry out alongside a fireplace, Mother."

"I suppose you could put on your slicker and your rain hat and your boots," Mrs.

Morton agreed, smiling. "Daddy wants to take the car to the garage and have it looked over and make arrangements to leave it, and I should like to lie down and rest a few moments. Will you promise not to go far away, dear, and to keep this house in sight?"

Honey Bunch promised, and got into her rainy-day garments with great glee. As she passed him, the old man, who was sweeping little streams of water off the front porch, told her she looked like a regular sailor.

"I like to see a girl who isn't afraid of the weather," the old man declared.

Honey Bunch found that a path led down one side of the hotel to the beach. The yard was full of clotheslines with dripping bathing suits hanging on them. Honey Bunch was sorry for the people who owned them, for none of those suits would be dry for hours and hours. And while it is true that you get your bathing suit soaking wet almost as soon as you put it on, you certainly do not want it soaking wet before you put it on.

As soon as she left the yard of the hotel,

she was walking in sand. There was a wide stretch of sand before you came to the ocean, and Honey Bunch decided it must be low tide. She turned around, saw her mother at one of the upper windows, and waved to her.

Then she struck out, straight across the wide sand stretch, and though her rubber boots felt pretty heavy, she persevered and presently came to the edge of the water. The ocean was not blue, but slaty gray, and the breakers seemed to be quieter than usual, too. But out at sea the white caps were tossing madly and the wind blew into Honey Bunch's face with a force that almost took her breath away.

"Perhaps I'd better walk alongside of it," she thought, remembering what the old man had said about "drying out alongside the fire."

She started to walk slowly—she couldn't run against that wind—and then she saw a figure ahead of her. He wore the long flapping pants and short blue jacket that

HONEY BUNCH LOOKED AT HIM ATTENTIVELY.

Honey Bunch: Her First Summer on an Island.

Honey Bunch knew sailors wear and when she came closer to him she saw that he had "a sailor's face," as she afterward told her mother. By that Honey Bunch meant his face was much tanned by wind and sun, and his eyes, under the peaked blue cap, were puckered at the corners as though he had been staring across blue water for many years.

"Hello, shipmate!" he said when he saw Honey Bunch. "Haven't you slipped your anchor?"

"How do you do?" said Honey Bunch politely. "I haven't any anchor."

"I meant, aren't you kind of little to be out all alone?" the sailor asked.

"Mother said it was all right," Honey Bunch informed him. "We're staying at the Bay View till we go to the bungalow."

"All's well, then," said the sailor, who certainly did not talk like any one Honey Bunch had ever met, but who was nevertheless a delightful person to hear. "My masts and rigging have been carried away, or I might

know better than to try to steer without a compass."

Honey Bunch didn't know what he was talking about, but she suspected that he might be worrying about his masts and rigging. Now that she looked at him a second time, he didn't seem very happy.

"Could I find your masts and rigging for you?" she asked timidly.

"Bless your sweet face, you can't help me," said the sailor. "Old Jack Bett is fathoms deep in trouble and nobody can help him out. Guess he'll go down to the bottom of the sea."

This was dreadful! Honey Bunch certainly didn't want any one as nice as this kind-faced sailor, with the bushy eyebrows and tanned face and hearty, deep voice, to go down to the bottom of the sea.

"What happened to you?" she asked anxiously. "Is Jack Bett your name?"

"My name; and up to now, without a blot on it," said the old sailor gloomily, staring out to sea.

Honey Bunch touched him timidly on the sleeve.

"Is there a blot now?" she asked.

Jack Bett turned and looked at her.

"I'm in a mort of trouble," he said heavily. "But there's no cause for you to worry your pretty head over it, my dear."

Honey Bunch nodded that same pretty head vigorously.

"How much is a mort?" she asked.

Jack Bett took off his peaked cap and ran his hand through his hair. Honey Bunch saw that it was black hair, but with more white in it than black.

"I see I might as well tell you," said the sailor. "Wait till I fetch you an easy chair, because it's a fairly long story."

CHAPTER VIII

JACK BETT'S TROUBLE

JACK BETT picked up two old buckets which were lying in the sand a short distance off, and turned them upside down. Honey Bunch sat on one and he sat on the other and they were so interested in each other that neither noticed the rain had stopped and that the clouds in the west were beginning to part and show light through.

"I do a lot of errands for folks hereabouts, in the summer," Jack Bett began, while Honey Bunch looked at him attentively.

"Mostly I use my big rowboat—I like it better than these motor boats. You can't depend on a motor boat, but a rowboat will serve you as long as you've got your hands and arms.

"Well, this day I'm telling you of, I had a pretty good cargo on board; I'd been to the

post-office and got some registered mail and two insured packages. One was a set of six solid silver teaspoons Mrs. Eddy's mother was sending her for an anniversary present, and one was Mrs. George's little gold beads she'd sent down to the city to have strung over, after she broke the chain. Besides, I had some new books for some of the island folks, and a dozen pairs of new socks and a box of neckties one of the gift-shop women had ordered from Bayport."

"What is a gift-shop woman?" asked Honey Bunch, anxious to understand the story.

"Miss Hetty's one," Jack Bett said. "She keeps a gift shop on Cedar Point Isand."

"That's where we're going!" cried Honey Bunch eagerly.

"That so? Well, you'll see Miss Hetty's gift shop then," Jack Bett said gravely. "I hardly get so far up coast. These neckties and socks I was telling you about were for Miss Hetty's cousin—Esther Hackett who keeps a gift shop on Star Island."

He stopped and was silent so long that Honey Bunch was afraid he had forgotten what happened next. She kept still, though, and by and by he went on.

"I had all the things in my boat and was rowing for Star Island when I happened to remember that Miss Lotty wanted me to stop and take a box over to the mainland for her the next time I passed Silver Cove. That's another island and a little out of the way; but I'd been promising Miss Lotty I'd come over, and this morning seemed a good time to get that errand off my mind. So I changed my course and rowed to the Cove and fastened the boat."

He stopped again and again Honey Bunch waited patiently.

"Well," went on Jack Bett, with a sigh, "as it turned out, it would have been better if I had put Miss Lotty off a little longer. For no sooner had I tied up the boat and was chartering my course to her house than I had a collision with one of the shore rocks and rolled it down on my foot."

"Ouch!" cried Honey Bunch, drawing up her own foot in sympathy.

"I've climbed over rocks most of my life," said Jack Bett scornfully, "and here, at my age, I go slipping and sliding and letting a dumb stone get the better of me. When I got my foot free, it was as much as I could do to hobble.

"I thought I was lucky to be at Silver Cove, where they have a doctor, summers, and I limped and hobbled and rolled my way into harbor. Doc pretty nearly took my foot apart to find out what was the matter with it, but he bandaged me up and said I'd be as good as new in a few weeks."

"That was nice," said Honey Bunch, with satisfaction.

"What I found when I got back to the shore, though, wasn't so nice," said the sailor. "I got the box from Miss Lotty and started for the boat and when I got to where I'd tied it, there wasn't any boat there!"

"Oh-h!" breathed Honey Bunch. "Oh, my! Where was it?"

"Gone!" said Sailor Jack Bett. "Completely gone, sunk, disappeared, lost forever."

"Didn't you ever find it?" Honey Bunch demanded.

"Never did, nor any of the things in it," answered the sailor. "At first I was sure some one had stolen it and I blamed myself plenty for leaving val-u-ables in it—like silver teaspoons, you know. I was ready to accuse any one I met of stealing that boat and those val-u-ables."

"Who stole it?" asked Honey Bunch, almost as excited as though she had seen some one taking the boat.

"I've about concluded no one stole it," the sailor replied. "Two or three folks told me later they saw a boat drifting out in the bay, long toward night time. If no one stole it, it got untied—maybe the knot was loose—and drifted off. Either way, the val-u-ables are lost."

"I suppose," said Honey Bunch, with a deep sigh, "that they are at the bottom of the

sea. Maybe the mermaids are playing with them."

"I wouldn't care if the mermaids had my boat," the old sailor declared. "They could have everything I've got and welcome. What makes me sick is that it looks as though I'd taken the val-u-ables and sold them and spent the money."

Honey Bunch stared at him in shocked surprise.

"But you didn't!" she protested.

The sailor held out an enormous brown hand.

"You're my idea of a first mate," he said approvingly, as Honey Bunch shook hands with him. "Of course I didn't sell the teaspoons and the other things; I'm sixty-five come next March and I never took a penny in this world that didn't belong to me."

"No, of course not," echoed Honey Bunch, her blue eyes beaming confidently upon her new friend.

"But that doesn't mean every one's to our way of thinking," Jack Bett said warningly.

"I've got a feeling that some of the folks what own that cargo talk it over among themselves; perhaps they think I've buried the money to tide me over next winter. I can see their side of it, too—val-u-ables bring money if they're sold."

"You wouldn't sell their teaspoons and beads," repeated Honey Bunch, "nor their neckties and socks. Only horrid people would think you would do that."

The old sailor shook his head, but he looked a little more cheerful.

"I wouldn't touch a penny I hadn't earned," he asserted. "I'd 'a' been a thief years ago if my leaning was that way. But it would look better for me if the boat floated ashore; light craft doesn't go to the bottom of the sea and leave no trace, unless it's sunk, you know. We haven't had a storm, till last night, since the day she slipped her moorings."

"Perhaps some one else stole it," suggested Honey Bunch.

She looked so small and so worried and

anxious, sitting on the old bucket, that the old sailor was suddenly sorry for her.

"I didn't go to worry you," he said kindly. "I'm so down-hearted myself, it seems as though I tried to make every one else blue. Don't you worry your pretty head about that boat; if she's gone, she's gone and that's all there is to it."

Honey Bunch heard a familiar whistle behind her.

"That's my daddy calling me," she explained, rising hastily. "I do hope you find your boat, Mr. Bett. But, anyway, I know you didn't sell a single solitary thing—so there now!"

She smiled at the old man and he made her a funny little ducking motion with his head that was evidently his notion of a bow. Then Honey Bunch turned and hurried back to the hotel. When she reached the path that led through the yard, she turned and looked back; the sailor was standing just as she had left him, staring after her. That night at the dinner table Honey Bunch told

her daddy and mother about Jack Bett. She said she hoped he wouldn't stay out on the beach all night looking for his boat and Mr. Morton said that was not likely to happen.

"He must have lost it several days ago, and if it hasn't drifted ashore by this time, the chances are it never will," he said. "I'm sorry for him, too, but my little girl mustn't worry. Perhaps we can do something for this old sailor before we go home."

Honey Bunch thought a great deal about the lost boat that evening. She could not stay up very late, but she pretended to be very wide awake indeed while she listened to one lady play on a piano and another sing. Half way through the song Honey Bunch went to sleep behind her daddy's back, on a comfortable red velvet sofa, and, as she indignantly said, no one would have known anything about it if she had not let her feet fall off.

After that she went upstairs hearing the rain still beating steadily against the windows. Honey Bunch thought sleepily that she would rather be on land than in a boat during

a rainy night. The next moment she was in bed and was as surprised as usual to wake up and find it morning.

It was a wonderful morning, too—"gallons of sunshine," Honey Bunch reported joyously to her mother.

When she went out into the hall to look for her daddy, who had gone down to the desk to see about their boat tickets, she saw a window that opened on the other side of the house.

Honey Bunch peeped out and there was a long wharf and a steamer tied up at it, with smoke coming out of its funnels.

"We're going on that! I know we're going on that!" whispered Honey Bunch to herself, giving a little bounce.

Sure enough, when she saw her daddy and asked him, he said the steamer was the *Gilroy* and that they had just time to eat breakfast and go on board.

As she skipped along the board walk that led from the hotel to the wharf, Honey Bunch looked around for Jack Bett. She did not see

the old sailor, but she saw "every one else," as she told her mother.

Mr. Morton laughed when he heard Honey Bunch say that.

"Usually there isn't such a crowd," he declared; "but the storm kept people in Bayport over night. Look out for the crane, dear."

Honey Bunch was staring in fascination at a long iron arm that reached down to the wharf and apparently picked up boxes and trunks and barrels and lifted them aboard the steamer. The iron arm was fastened to an iron beam and Honey Bunch wanted to stay and watch it.

"There won't be any room for us," she murmured.

The deck of the small boat was piled high with freight and baggage, but a stream of people were going up the gangplank and the Mortons followed them. A busy man in a blue coat and with gold braid on his cap smiled at Honey Bunch and swung her to the top of a large packing box.

"Can't let a little girl like you get lost in this shuffle," he said. "Sorry we're crowded this trip, but we cut our schedule yesterday, because of the storm," he added to Mr. Morton.

Honey Bunch knew this busy man must be the captain, and a few moments later she heard some one call him "Captain Draper."

"Are they all going to Cedar Point Island?" asked Honey Bunch, looking around wonderingly.

"Oh, my, no," her mother answered. "The boat stops at other islands, and I dare say we have passengers for all of them. There goes the whistle!"

Honey Bunch put her hands over her ears as three piercing shrieks sounded from the ship's whistle. Two late comers came running up the gangplank, a heavy barrel came tumbling over the deck rail, a sailor from some hidden place shouted cheerfully and an answering hail came from the wharf.

Then Honey Bunch felt the boat begin to move slowly and she knew that they were

leaving Bayport. The people on the boat began to laugh and those who could not get near the rail started to ask:

"What is it?" "What happened?" "What's the joke?"

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" Honey Bunch could hear a man roaring gleefully.

CHAPTER IX

PLENTY OF CHILDREN

"WHAT makes the man laugh?" asked Honey Bunch, from the top of her packing box. "What makes him laugh, Daddy?"

"Somebody's dog was left behind," a man from out the crowd answered.

Honey Bunch couldn't see him, but she heard some one say:

"Oh, look! look!"

Then there was a rush of feet across the deck.

"Get back!" Honey Bunch heard the captain shouting. "Get back—don't all come on this side."

"The dog jumped into the water and is swimming after the boat," a man said to Honey Bunch's daddy.

Honey Bunch couldn't see the plucky little dog, but evidently one of the sailors leaned

over the railing of the deck and scooped up the little animal, for presently every one began to laugh again and try to squeeze themselves into a smaller space.

"You'd better get up there with Honey Bunch," said Mr. Morton to his wife. "That dog is shaking himself dry and the passengers are trying to keep out of his way."

He helped Mrs. Morton up and she sat beside Honey Bunch.

"Whose dog is it?" asked Honey Bunch.

"It belongs to one of the crew," replied a passenger who overheard her. "Guess it's a pretty good dog to take all that trouble to keep up with his master."

It was pleasant on top of the packing box and Honey Bunch and her mother felt secure and out of the way. They could see one side of the boat, but the other was hidden by more boxes, though at the first stop the steamer made, several of these were taken off.

It was fun to watch some of the passengers get off at this island, too. One woman, with a bird cage, wanted to come back after she

was on the wharf, because she said she had forgotten the cover for her bird cage. No one could find it, and the captain said he was late and he'd tell the crew to keep looking for it and if they found it, he would send it to her.

"That was Star Island, wasn't it?" some one asked the captain.

He said "Yes," and Honey Bunch remembered that Jack Bett had been rowing toward Star Island when he remembered about Miss Lotty on Silver Cove Island.

"Wouldn't it be nice," said Honey Bunch dreamily, "if we should see Mr. Bett's rowboat floating on the water and we should pick it up for him and find the silver teaspoons and the gold beads and everything?"

"It would be lovely," Mrs. Morton agreed. "But I'm afraid that is too good to come true."

The second island was Silver Cove Island and Honey Bunch stood up on the box to see if she could see any one who looked like Miss Lotty standing among the people on

the dock at which the *Gilroy* had stopped.

"Of course I wouldn't exactly know her, because I never saw her," explained Honey Bunch to her mother. "But I might see some one who looks almost like her."

However, Honey Bunch didn't see any one who looked at all like Miss Lotty—so she said—and the steamer chugged-chugged away again, after a brief wait.

More people had gone ashore and more boxes and barrels and crates and trunks had gone with them. There was plenty of room on the deck now, so Honey Bunch and her mother climbed down and went to stand at the railing with Daddy Morton.

"Is our island the next one?" asked Honey Bunch eagerly.

"Not the next one, but the one after the next one," Mr. Morton replied. "We're coming to Lobster Island now."

Honey Bunch didn't think that was a very pretty name—not half as pretty as "Cedar Point Island," for instance—but when she saw it, she had to admit that the children on the

little bathing beach seemed to be having a wonderful time.

They waved their hands at the people on the steamer and one little boy, in a green bathing suit, held up a string of mussels for Honey Bunch to see. The little fox terrier came running across the deck to bark fiercely at the laughing, shouting children, and Honey Bunch found herself wishing that she could take off her shoes and stockings and go wading.

"Now the next is ours, isn't it, Daddy?" she said hopefully, as with two tremendous "toots" of its whistle, the *Gilroy* said good-by to Lobster Island.

"The next is ours," Mr. Morton declared, smiling.

Honey Bunch watched eagerly. It was half an hour before she saw something dark looming up ahead in the sunlight and a few moments later she could see a sharp point of land which seemed to be covered with tall slim cedar trees that grew close down to the water.

"I wonder if we'd better make a landing at Cedar Point to-day?" said the captain, coming up back of Honey Bunch.

That small girl turned around quickly.

"Oh, we have to get off there!" she said anxiously.

"At Cedar Point? You sure you want to get off there?" asked the captain.

"Yes, please," Honey Bunch said. "It's important because we said we were going there."

The captain unhooked the brass chain that shut off the gangplank entrance.

"Well, if it's important, I think we *will* stop," he said seriously.

Honey Bunch glanced up and saw that the steamer had glided gently to the end of a long wharf. The wharf looked rickety, but it must have been pretty strong, for there were people and bicycles and wheelbarrows and many other things jumbled together on it. Honey Bunch saw two canoes and a wooden thing her mother told her was a churn, and an iron bed, before she saw a line

of children trailing along at the furthest end of the wharf.

"Now, there," said Honey Bunch, speaking as she had often heard Mrs. Miller talk, "come the Ryders and the Pattersons."

"You never saw them in your life," her daddy laughed, "so how do you know?"

"I know," said Honey Bunch wisely, and she shook hands with the captain and went tripping down the gangplank to find herself surrounded by a circle of smiling children.

A little, chubby, brown-eyed woman, and a taller, slim brown-eyed woman, both tried to kiss Mrs. Morton at once.

"We thought you were never coming," said the chubby little woman, shaking hands with Mr. Morton.

"Here's Honey Bunch!" the other one cried, swooping through the circle to kiss Honey Bunch.

"I'm Aunt Isabel, dear," she explained. "This is your Aunt Eva. And this great bean pole is my nephew, Ted Patterson, and the two little boys are his brothers, Mason

and Herb. The middy-blouse girl is Drina Patterson, and the other three are my daughters, Betsy, Kate and Dora Ryder."

Honey Bunch blinked, as well she might. This nice Aunt Isabel Ryder talked so fast and laughed so much and introduced so many boys and girls, one right after the other, that Honey Bunch was sure she could never get the two families sorted out.

"Come right on up to the house," said Aunt Isabel briskly. "You're all coming to our house for lunch, you know. We've been airing your bungalow and the blankets are out on the line. I think it will be all right for you, but there is nothing in the house to eat yet."

Two little girls took hold of Honey Bunch's hand and marched her off in the procession. They were all tanned as brown as the leather on Honey Bunch's new suitcase and they seemed very merry and happy.

"You'll like it up here," said the "middy-blouse girl," tossing back her very black hair and smiling at Honey Bunch.

"You're Kate Ryder, aren't you?" Honey Bunch asked hopefully.

To her surprise, they all laughed.

"Don't you let them mix you up, Honey Bunch Morton," said Ted Patterson, the "bean pole" boy.

He was tall and thin and freckled and Honey Bunch liked him at once.

"Aunt Isabel forgets that so many of us make a crowd," said Ted. "By this afternoon you'll have us all straight in your mind. Drina is my sister. She always wears a middy blouse and you can tell her by that."

Honey Bunch looked at the two little girls walking beside her.

"We're Betsy and Kate Ryder," said the little girl on her left. "Dora is a year older than you are and Betsy's nearly nine and I'm almost ten."

Honey Bunch wisely decided to wait. The more they talked, the more "mixed up" she became in her mind. But as soon as they reached the little row of bungalows, built in a straight line and facing the sea, she saw

there was one member of the group whose name she would always be able to remember.

Down the sandy path, from a pretty bungalow painted white and orange, came rambling a fat, old collie dog, with the most affectionate eyes and the loveliest plumed tail and the sweetest dog-smile you would ever wish to see.

"This is Burtis, Honey Bunch," said Ted Patterson gravely. "He's fourteen years old and he never said a cross word to any one in all his life."

Burtis wagged his tail heartily and said "Ha-ha" at Honey Bunch.

"You can hug him—he likes it," said Betsy Ryder.

"Mother," Honey Bunch declared as her mother and Mrs. Ryder and Mrs. Patterson caught up with them, "I *like* Cedar Point Island!"

CHAPTER X

GETTING ACQUAINTED

THE more Honey Bunch saw of the island, the better she liked it. The children took her through the three bungalows and no one seemed to mind this army sweeping in one door and out another, lumbering, kind-eyed old Burtis tagging after and putting his head down in a lap to be petted the moment any one sat down.

The three bungalows were almost alike. They were built after the same plans, but they were painted different colors. The Patterson bungalow was white and orange, the Ryder house was brown and tan, and the bungalow the three Mortons were to live in was green and white.

Each bungalow had a little porch and gay striped awnings and a tiny patch of grass in

front with a white flagpole and a round bed of flowers in the exact center.

By the time Honey Bunch had seen all three bungalows, Aunt Isabel Ryder called them to lunch in her house.

"You children will simply have to sit on the porch steps and eat," she told the youngsters. "This isn't the largest dining-room table in the world and there just isn't room for eight children."

"I'll 'tend to them, Aunt Isabel," said Ted Patterson briskly. "You won't have to do a thing. Come on, you kids, pretend you're at a cafeteria."

Honey Bunch thought this was great fun. Ted lined them up and marched them, single file, into the kitchen where he told them to help themselves to a plate, knife and fork and then march past the fireless cooker where he himself helped them to baked macaroni and cheese and gave each a roll that Drina buttered as fast as one was taken.

When they were again out on the porch, sitting on the steps, Ted brought out a pitcher

of milk and Drina handed out china cups and every one had milk to drink.

"We often eat like this," explained Ted, "especially when we're up here for the summer. I suppose it isn't good for the manners of the kids, but it saves work for the mothers."

Mason and Herb, Ted's younger brothers, sniffed, and Honey Bunch, eager to keep peace, asked how long Ted had been at the island.

"We came up three weeks ago," he answered, tossing Burtis half a roll. "Haven't had a bit of rain, either, till yesterday and last night. And if I'm not mistaken, we're going to get another shower to-day."

He pointed to a tower of white clouds piled high in the hazy blue sky.

"Aw, you always say it's going to rain," grumbled Mason. "We want to show Honey Bunch the bathing beach."

"Dishes first," Drina reminded him.

Honey Bunch didn't know what that meant, but she soon found out. Drina said

that they didn't think it fair their mothers should have to cook and wash dishes too, during vacation, so they had worked out a plan.

"Mother does all the cooking one week," said Drina, "and the next week it is Aunt Isabel's turn. And we children wash and dry all the dishes; this week I am washing dishes and Mason and Herb are drying them. Next week the others do it."

"I can help, too," Honey Bunch cried. "I think that's the nicest plan!"

"I like it best when we don't have any dishes," confided Mason gloomily. "When we eat down on the beach there are never any dishes to wash."

However, he went in to help Drina amiably enough and Honey Bunch insisted on helping them. Mrs. Morton, who had learned of the plan from her two friends, declared that she must "take turns" cooking, too.

Before the dishes were all put away, a fog had rolled in from the sea and Honey Bunch

was surprised when a dash of rain blew against the kitchen window.

"We can't go down to the bathing beach," said Drina regretfully, hanging up her dishpan, "but we can find something else to do."

They heard Betsy and Kate and Dora Ryder squealing somewhere and the next moment the three little girls came pell-mell into the kitchen, shaking raindrops off their bobbed hair.

"We went to get the bathing suits!" gasped Betsy flinging a pile of garments down on a chair. "They were almost dry and it would be a shame to let them get soaking wet."

There was a line strung across the kitchen and Drina hung the bathing suits on this. She said they were not very wet and would be dry by morning.

"Let's go up and look at my shell collection," urged Mason Patterson, who was a friendly soul.

There was a second story to the bungalows, but they were little more than attics. On the floor Mason had arranged the shells he had

found and alas, he had "saved" some little dead fish, too.

"These," said Ted firmly, "go out. I don't see any sense in saving dead fish when you can find them after every low tide."

Honey Bunch thought the fish were dreadful, but she didn't say so. Instead she admired the shells, while Ted opened a window and tossed away the very smelly fish.

"I'm going to get one of every kind of shell there is," said Mason. "Every seashore place I go, I'll find more shells and when I've been all around the world, I'll have one of every kind of shell."

"How many seashore places have you been?" asked Honey Bunch.

"Well, this is the first one," Mason admitted. "But I have fourteen shells already."

The half finished attic was a splendid place for rainy-day play. The children could make as much noise as they pleased and it was Ted who proposed they play "one foot tag." Honey Bunch didn't know what that was, but Betsy Ryder was ready to tell her.

"You have to stand and run and hop on one foot," said Betsy. "Everything you do, you must be on one foot. If, when you're chasing some one or some one is chasing you, you forget, or you lose your balance, and come down on both feet, that makes you 'it'."

This sounded like great fun, and it was.

Honey Bunch found that she could get along on one foot nicely, as long as she leaned against the wall. But when one of the children tried to catch her and she ventured out into the center of the room, her other foot was apt to come down and a shout of, "You're it! Honey Bunch is it!" went up.

They were all out of breath from playing when Ted discovered that the sun was out, and, looking at his watch, declared they would just have time before supper was ready to go down to the dock to see the mail boat come in.

The wind blew fresh and strong from the sea and, when she found herself in the open air, Honey Bunch loved the strong salty taste on her tongue. It seemed as though every

one on the island must go down to see the mail boat come in, and Ted said that nearly every one did just that.

"There's Bertram Olds," said Drina, as they joined the crowd at the dock.

Honey Bunch saw a red-headed boy, a little taller than Mason Patterson, seated on one of the wharf pilings.

"Hello, Mason—hello, Herb—hello, Ted!" called this lad.

"We're here, too," said Betsy Ryder, a bit sharply. "This is a new cousin—that is, she is almost a cousin of ours. Her name is Honey Bunch Morton."

"Hello, Funny Bunch!" shrieked Bertram Olds. "Where did you get a name like that? Hey, Tommy Peters, come see Funny Bunch!"

Before Honey Bunch could say anything, Ted Patterson had reached the post. But Bertram was too quick for him and he slid down on the other side and danced away into the crowd, shouting tormentingly:

"Hello, Funny Bunch! Glad to know you, Funny Bunch!"

"He's a very impolite boy," said Kate Ryder severely.

"Don't you care what he says, Honey Bunch," Dora, Kate's sister, added consolingly.

"I don't mind," said Honey Bunch bravely, but, for all that, she didn't like to be called "Funny Bunch."

The mail boat rather disappointed Honey Bunch. She had expected to see a boat something like a post-office, she told her mother later. She thought it would have nice little pigeonholes on the sides and letters in the holes and perhaps people would go up the gangplank and ask the captain for their letters and he would hand them out through a neat little window.

But the mail boat looked very much like the *Gilroy* which had brought Honey Bunch to Cedar Point Island. The mail was in heavy canvas sacks and these were tossed to

the dock and a man took them and carried them over to a store where two girls, working at a long table, sorted the letters and papers, and put them in the boxes which covered one side of the store.

These girls worked very fast indeed and they had the mail all sorted and were ready to give it out in less than twenty minutes. Ted Patterson took charge of the mail for the Ryders and Pattersons and they all went back to the bungalows where Mr. Morton was sorting his fishing tackle and Honey Bunch's mother and her two "new aunts," as she called Mrs. Ryder and Mrs. Patterson, were cooking supper.

At supper Honey Bunch learned that her daddy was going fishing in the morning and that he would leave hours before she was awake.

"We have a lot to do to-morrow, too," said Betsy Ryder seriously. "We have to show Honey Bunch the bathing beach and where we have picnics."

"Show her Sentinel Rock," Mason suggested.

"I was leaving that for a surprise," said Betsy reprovingly. "You can't have any surprises with boys around."

Every one was quite willing to go to bed early, and the last thing Honey Bunch heard was the pounding of the surf and the tide coming in and breaking against the rocks.

That was the first sound she heard in the morning, too, and at first she couldn't remember where she was.

"Did Daddy go fishing?" she asked, sitting up in bed.

"Hours ago," answered her mother from the next room. "Honey Bunch, this is absolutely the loveliest day I ever saw!"

Well, it was. Honey Bunch thought so herself when, after breakfast, she started out with the Ryders and Pattersons to be shown the island.

"This is the first time in all my life I ever had enough people to play with," remarked

Honey Bunch, as she flung herself upon Burtis and hugged him, just to let him know how happy she was.

The bathing beach was the first spot they visited. Honey Bunch found that it was a wide stretch of sand, "like a blanket" she said; and indeed it did look something like a long blanket spread on the ground, for on either side of it the coast was a mass of jagged rocks.

"We can go bathing this afternoon," said Drina, when Honey Bunch had seen the beach. "We want to show you the other places first."

Burtis insisted on going with them, though Drina said he was too fat to walk so much on a hot day.

"We can walk slower," said Honey Bunch kindly. "If we don't hurry, I don't believe it will tire him out."

"He eats too much," Drina declared. "Every one on the island feeds him and he is too good-natured to refuse any food."

"I'll bet he has fifty bones buried that he

isn't hungry enough to eat," Mason added.

"I suppose folks think he is hungry, because he comes around to their houses. But really all he wants to do is to talk to them," said Betsy Ryder.

Burtis, following them, listened amiably enough to the chatter, and wagged his tail each time he thought some one was looking at him. When they came to the picnic grove he lay down under the first tree with a grunt of satisfaction.

"What a *nice* place!" cried Honey Bunch, staring about her.

She stood surrounded by lovely cool shadowy cedar trees, white sand trickling over her shoes, and a wind that smelled something like the ocean and something like the cedars and something like flowers blowing softly over her.

"We always come here to have picnics in the day time," Ted was explaining. "When we have a supper outdoors at night, though, we always go to the beach because we can build a fire there."

It was so cool and shady in the picnic grove that Honey Bunch was willing to stay there and rest as long as ten minutes. That is a long time, you know, to keep still in vacation.

"Now," cried Mason Patterson, as they left the grove, "come on and show Honey Bunch Sentinel Rock!"

They had to go back to the shore line and climb over rocks and the boys had to stop every few minutes and help Burtis, who was so old and so fat he could hardly jump from one rock to another. Honey Bunch saw a tall rock which stood out from the others and seemed to balance itself on a single point.

"That's it!" said Mason eagerly. "Ted, you boost Honey Bunch up—the rest of us know how to get up there."

Ted lifted Honey Bunch in his arms and held her while she scrambled and squirmed and finally managed to pull herself up to the flat top of the rock.

"Why," she said in great surprise, "there's somebody up here!"

CHAPTER XI

BERTRAM OLDS

"HELLO, Funny Bunch!" said a mocking voice.

The other children hastily began to climb the rock. They were used to this performance, and though it seemed to Honey Bunch that they must get in each other's way, apparently no toes or fingers were stepped on.

She sat herself on the extreme edge, just where she had landed, and stared at Bertram Olds. She didn't see why he, of all the people on Cedar Point Island, should have to be on top of the rock that morning!

"Showing Funny Bunch the sights?" asked Bertram, as Mason, red-faced and slightly out of breath, sat down beside Honey Bunch.

"You say that once more and over you go," Ted Patterson warned.

"Can't she take a little joshing?" asked Bertram crossly.

"She doesn't have to," Ted informed him briefly.

Bertram seemed about to say something, then changed his mind.

"I might as well be going," he murmured. "I want to go in bathing this morning."

He swung himself over the side of the rock and they heard him grunt as he landed on his feet. There was a sharp yelp from Burtis and Ted turned crimson with anger under his tan.

"Let that dog alone!" he shouted.

Bertram laughed, but a moment later they saw him running over the rocks.

"He can't help teasing anything or every one as long as he thinks he is safe," grumbled Ted. "I suppose he yanked poor old Burtis' tail as he went past him."

"Come and look at the ocean from here, Honey Bunch," Drina called.

She was standing on the edge of the flat, broad shelf, which was the top of Sentinel

Rock. Honey Bunch walked toward her cautiously, for she had a feeling that if she wasn't careful she might step off into the water.

"You can see all the ships from here," said Drina, putting a strong friendly arm around the little girl. "Up and down the coast, you can see them all as they pass. Folks say that pirates used to sit on this rock and watch for ships and then when they saw one, they would go out and wreck it and take all the gold and silver on board."

Honey Bunch at once remembered Jack Bett's boat. She wanted to ask whether there were any pirates on Cedar Point Island now and, if so, where they lived and whether they still wrecked ships.

"Perhaps," she thought to herself, "they wrecked the rowboat and took all the silver teaspoons and the gold beads." She felt very sorry for poor old Jack Bett.

But Honey Bunch did not feel that she knew the Ryders and Pattersons well enough yet to ask them about pirates. She was a

little afraid they might laugh at her—the boys especially—if there should happen to be no pirates on the island. And Honey Bunch Morton did not like to be laughed at. No one really likes that, you know.

So she said nothing about the lost rowboat, but she thought about it a great deal. Sentinel Rock became her favorite spot on the island and the children learned to look for her there if they missed her. Honey Bunch learned how to climb up on the rock herself without help, but she took care to make sure that Bertram Olds was not on the rock first.

He was the only one of all the children on the island who seemed to take delight in teasing Honey Bunch. In a few days she was well acquainted with the bungalow colony and Mr. Morton said her talk of the Jimmies and the Joans and the Annas and the Alberts made him quite dizzy.

A week went by so fast that Honey Bunch was perfectly astonished—she said so—when her mother reminded her that she had not

yet sent any cards to the friends she had left in Barham.

"I'm perfectly astonished," said Honey Bunch, which was what Mrs. Miller said when she went to hang out the clothes and found it raining.

It wasn't strange that Honey Bunch had forgotten to write her messages, she was so busy. She went in bathing every day and of course she had to watch the boats come in and she helped the others when they dried the dishes and she went on picnics and then at least once every day she climbed her favorite rock to see if she could see a boat, supposing she had been a pirate instead of a little girl.

She saw boats, plenty of them, but they were either steamers going up and down the coast, or the fishing boats that went out early in the morning and sometimes anchored within sight of the shore for the whole day.

However, Honey Bunch didn't want Ida Camp and Anna Martin and the other girls,

not to mention Mrs. Miller and Norman Clark, to think that she had forgotten them, so she sat down at the little wicker desk and with her mother to help her spell the names, she printed the names on her postcards.

Then Mrs. Morton wrote the messages because she could write plainly and quickly and Honey Bunch had a good deal to tell and she needed some one to write it plainly and quickly.

On her way to the little post-office, Honey Bunch (who could find her way alone all over the island by this time) caught up with Betsy Ryder.

"Oh, my," said Betsy, trying to hide something under her coat, "I didn't expect to see you, Honey Bunch."

"I have to mail my postcards," explained Honey Bunch.

Betsy never could keep a secret.

"These are invitations to my party," she said, showing Honey Bunch a neat little pile of white envelopes, which was what she had tried to hide at first.

"It's a secret, but the day after to-morrow is my birthday and I'm going to have a party in the picnic grove."

Honey Bunch wondered whether she was invited. She hoped she was. It did seem as though, living next door to the Ryders, she must be. She went on to the post-office with Betsy and watched her put the small white envelopes through the mail slot. Then Honey Bunch put her own mail into the slot and the two little girls went down to the bathing beach where they knew they would find the others.

The next morning, there was an invitation for Miss Gertrude Marion Morton to come to Betsy Ryder's birthday party at two-thirty o'clock on Wednesday afternoon.

"I have to take her a present, Mother," said Honey Bunch. "What can I take Betsy for a birthday present?"

"Well," and Mrs. Morton smiled, "I'll have to tell you a secret. I knew several days ago that Betsy was to have a birthday this week and I spoke to her mother about it;

and, Honey Bunch, this is your secret and mine and we mustn't tell about it till after the party——"

"Oh, no, I won't tell anybody," promised Honey Bunch earnestly. "I won't tell even Burtis, Mother. Whisper in my ear, Mother."

Mrs. Morton put her mouth close to Honey Bunch's curious little pink ear.

"Aunt Isabel Ryder sent to the city for a beautiful large doll for Betsy," whispered Mrs. Morton, "and I have made a little blue flannel coat and hat to fit it. That's your present to Betsy."

Dear, me, wasn't Honey Bunch pleased! She had to see the doll's coat and hat right away and she didn't see how she was to wait till the next day to show them to Betsy. She was so afraid she might be tempted to tell, in spite of her promise, that she went off to Sentinel Rock that afternoon and never asked any of the Ryders or the Pattersons to go with her.

There was a jagged little row of rocks, almost like steps, that Honey Bunch had found at one side of the big rock. If she went carefully, she could use these rocks as stepping stones and reach the broad flat top of Sentinel Rock without trouble. To-day she was so busy thinking about the birthday party that she forgot all about Bertram Olds, and she had pulled herself over the edge of the rock before she saw him sitting disconsolately before her.

"Hello, Funny Face!" he said, but his voice was so funny, Honey Bunch stared at him curiously.

"Are you sick, Bertram?" she asked anxiously.

"No, of course not," replied Bertram crossly.

Honey Bunch could see that he had been crying. She didn't like him, because he was so unkind and never missed a chance to tease her, but Honey Bunch could never bear to see any one unhappy.

"What's the matter, Bertram?" she asked, holding out her own clean little pocket handkerchief.

He took the handkerchief and scrubbed at his eyes, mumbling that some dirt had blown into them.

"I spent my allowance for candy," he explained, "and Mother won't give me any more this week, 'cause she's mad at me, and I can't go to the party unless I have a present to take Betsy. I never heard of any one going to a birthday party without taking a present!"

"My, no!" said Honey Bunch quickly. "No one ever goes to a birthday party without a present. But you come to my house and my mother will make you a present to take."

Bertram handed back the handkerchief and got to his feet.

"Say, will she?" he asked eagerly. "Honest, will she? My mother is so mad 'cause I spent all my allowance for candy that she won't help me a bit. Will your

mother really know how to make a present?"

"She knows how to make all kinds of presents," replied Honey Bunch proudly. "Come on, and we'll ask her."

Bertram went back to the bungalow with Honey Bunch, and Mrs. Morton, when she heard his story, said that if his mother was willing, she would make him a box of candy to take to Betsy.

"Only you mustn't eat it up yourself, Bertram," she warned him.

Bertram promised not to touch it and he dashed home and asked his mother if it would be all right, because Mrs. Morton said she wouldn't make the candy if his mother didn't want him to have it. His mother said if Mrs. Morton was willing to take all that trouble, she had nothing to say, so the next afternoon Bertram had his box of candy to take to the party.

It was a wonderful party and every one had such a good time! Betsy had a cake with nine candles on it, and her doll was the largest any of the children had ever seen. It

wore "real clothes," Drina Patterson said. By that she meant it wore clothes as large as a real year-old-baby would wear.

Betsy was delighted with the flannel coat and hat Honey Bunch brought her and she put them on the doll at once. They left the doll sitting at the refreshment table when, after every one had had all the sandwiches and cake and ice cream he could eat, they scattered for another game of tag.

"Say, Honey Bunch," said Bertram in a low tone, as they were watching Mason chase Betsy, "I'll never call you 'Funny Bunch' any more. I'm—I'm sorry I acted so mean to you."

"That's all right," Honey Bunch assured him sunnily. "I don't believe you knew I didn't like to be called that."

A few minutes later Betsy, now no longer "it," went back to the table to see how her new doll was enjoying the party.

"Eva Belle is lost!" the others heard her shriek. "Oh-h, some one has carried off Eva Belle."

CHAPTER XII

EVA BELLE IS FOUND

BETSY RYDER had named the doll "Eva Belle" for her Aunt Eva Patterson and for her own mother. And now it seemed that Eva Belle had disappeared before Betsy had really had a chance to become acquainted with her.

"Bertram Olds, did you steal that doll?" asked Ted Patterson sternly.

Poor Bertram was such a tease that the moment anything like this happened, he was apt to be suspected.

"Honest, I didn't touch her," protested Bertram.

"No, he didn't," Honey Bunch spoke up. "He was close to me all the time we were playing tag."

Mason and Herb Patterson got down on their knees and hunted under the table.

There was no doll there. They woke up sleepy old Burtis, who was growing so deaf that he could sleep right through a game of tag without being disturbed by the noise. But Burtis was so sound asleep it was plain that no thief could have been heard by him.

"Perhaps," thought Honey Bunch to herself, "it was those pirates."

She meant the pirates that she suspected were hovering around ready to steal boats. She rather thought if they stole boats, they would steal other things, though it was hard to imagine what a pirate would do with a large doll if he did steal it.

Poor Betsy was crying and it was a sad ending to the gay birthday party. The three mothers had walked down to the mail boat, and they came back to find the little guest of honor crying as hard as she could and the birthday guests trying their best to comfort her.

"Why, Daughter, don't feel too bad," said Betsy's mother. "Eva Belle must be on the

island; she couldn't get away. We'll find her somewhere."

But though the boys looked everywhere they could think of and the little girls hunted through the coarse sea grass, they could not find Eva Belle. They had to go home without her.

All things that were lost on the island were advertised for on the bulletin board in the post-office. Mrs. Ryder said she would write out a notice about Eva Belle and have it placed on the bulletin board and perhaps that would bring back the missing doll.

It seemed to comfort Betsy to see the notice on the board, and she stood before it every time she went for the mail and spelled out the description of the lost Eva Belle.

"I don't see where she went," she said over and over to Honey Bunch. "A big doll like that just couldn't get up and walk away."

Mason argued that a big doll could walk away as easily as a little doll, but Ted said that no one was to argue with Betsy and

whenever Ted gave an order the others tried to do as he directed.

And after all, it was Honey Bunch Morton who found Eva Belle. She had gone down to her favorite rock, intending to climb up on it and watch for the *Gilroy* which was due that morning.

As she skipped over the uneven rocks that covered the shore line, Honey Bunch glanced down, and there was a bit of something blue in the crevice between two rocks.

"Why—why—" said Honey Bunch, too surprised for words.

She put in her hand and drew out the coat her mother had made for the big doll.

"Where's Eva Belle?" said Honey Bunch aloud, and the big sea gull flying overhead opened his mouth and made a sound that she took to be "Don't know."

Honey Bunch looked over the rocks carefully, but she could find nothing else. So she went on to the big rock, carrying the little blue coat in her hand.

She began to climb her "staircase," as she

called the stepping-stone rocks, and there, hidden among the stones above high tide line, she saw the doll. Eva Belle was sitting placidly with her back against one rock and her pretty blue hat lying under a smaller stone.

Honey Bunch pulled her out and found that she wasn't damaged at all. Her hat was a little crushed, but Honey Bunch smoothed that out and put it on her head, and put her coat on her, too. Eva Belle looked as pretty as she had when Betsy had first unpacked her doll.

Of course this was no time to sit on Sentinel Rock and watch for boats. Honey Bunch hurried back to the bungalow as fast as her feet would carry her. Betsy, sitting sadly on the front steps, saw her coming.

"Honey Bunch!" screamed Betsy, "is that Eva Belle?"

Drina and her mother heard her, and Mrs. Morton heard, too. They came running out and Honey Bunch put the doll into Betsy's arms.

"I found her hidden down among the rocks," she explained.

But that did not explain the mystery of how Eva Belle came to be lost. Betsy said she didn't care, now that she had her doll again, but Ted and Mason and Herb were determined to find out who had carried off the doll. Honey Bunch was anxious, too, and she was almost sure it was pirates.

It wasn't pirates, though, as she discovered a few days later. The captain of the *Gilroy* heard the story of the lost and found doll from the postmaster and he said he believed he could clear up the mystery.

"I had a Russian wolfhound on board last Wednesday," said the captain. "It was such a valuable critter and the lady that shipped it gave me so much advice on how to take care of it, she had me and the whole crew taking care of that dog as if he'd been made of solid gold.

"It was so restless it wouldn't keep still, and every stop we made I had to tell some one to hang on to the leash. The critter

could jump an eight-foot fence, so I knew he would go over the deck rail if he wasn't watched.

"Well, when we tied up at Cedar Point Island, every one was busy, and I'm blamed if that dog didn't get away. I didn't miss him till we were about ready to shove off and then one of the crew saw him perched on top of Sentinel Rock. I thought then he might be going to dive over and go down to play with the mermaids, and I wouldn't have cared much if he had.

"But I was responsible for him, so I sent Ben Grubber after the pesky critter and after chasing him over half the coast, he got him back. Now I'll bet that dog took the doll and then got tired of it and dropped it among the rocks."

Talking it over, the children agreed that this was what must have happened. Burtis, said Ted, was so old and deaf that a young, fleet-footed dog could steal into the picnic grove, seize the doll, and be off with it before he was seen. And the Russian wolfhound

had dropped Eva Belle's coat as he carried her over the rocks—that would explain why the coat was not on the doll when Honey Bunch found her.

"As long as he didn't drop my darling Eva Belle into the ocean, I don't care," said Betsy contentedly.

"It was almost like the time that Rover took Ida Grace when we were at Lake Tickaloc," said Honey Bunch.

A few days after she had found the doll, Honey Bunch came out of the store where groceries, dresses, nails, and hammers, and about everything else any one on the island was likely to need, were sold, and on the other side of the street she saw some one she knew.

"Well! Well!" said the old sailor, Jack Bett, as she crossed the road to speak to him, "if it isn't the little skipper herself!"

Honey Bunch chuckled. Jack Bett had a new name for her each time he spoke to her, it seemed.

"How do you like Cedar Point Island?" he asked her now. "I'm taking back some stuff to the mainland for Mr. Barr."

Mr. Barr, Honey Bunch knew, was the postmaster. He also kept the store.

"Did you ever get back your boat?" asked Honey Bunch eagerly.

"No," the old sailor said regretfully. "No, I never even heard tell any more of it. I've given it up for lost. I wouldn't care so much about the boat—though it's worth money and a man like me can't afford to lose money—if I could get back the val-u-ables. I just can't abide the thought of going to the Sailors' Snug Harbor before those silver teaspoons and the gold beads are found. Folks might point me out as the man who lost some val-u-ables and didn't make 'em good."

Honey Bunch saw Betsy and Drina coming down the street. They were carrying the bathing suits for the whole family and Honey Bunch remembered they had promised to meet her and go to the bathing beach.

"Where's the Sailors' Snug Harbor?" she asked hurriedly. "When are you going there, Mr. Bett?"

"When I'm so old I can't handle a boat," said Jack Bett placidly. "It's a home for old sailors and I aim to spend my last days there. But I won't go long as I can work and I can't go contented till I find out what happened to those val-u-ables."

He touched his cap and shuffled on as Drina and Betsy caught up with Honey Bunch.

"Who was that?" whispered Betsy.

"Isn't that the sailor who did something with Mrs. Eddy's teaspoons?" Drina questioned. "Seems to me Bertram Olds said he took them, or something like that."

"He didn't! He didn't!" stormed Honey Bunch, beginning to cry. "He never stole any teaspoons!"

"Why, Honey Bunch," Drina said, in astonishment, "I never saw you cry before. What did I say that I shouldn't say, darling?"

CHAPTER XIII

THE GOOD LITTLE BEACH

BETSY RYDER had never seen Honey Bunch cry before, either. In fact, she so seldom cried, that very likely some of her friends in Barham thought she just couldn't.

But she was crying now, and when she looked at Drina with wet blue eyes, "the middy-blouse girl" knelt right down on the gravel walk and put her arms around the little figure.

"What did I say to make you cry, Honey Bunch?" whispered Drina coaxingly.

"You said—" gulped Honey Bunch, "you said that Jack Bett stole teaspoons. And he never did!"

"But you don't know him, dear," Drina urged.

"Yes, I do," insisted Honey Bunch. "I

know him, Drina. He told me all about the teaspoons in Bayport."

"Well," said Drina, getting to her feet, "I don't see how you can know Jack Bett; but if you do and if you say he didn't steal anything, it must be so. Come on down to the bathing beach, because the others will be waiting for us."

As soon as they reached the bathing beach, Ted Patterson noticed that Honey Bunch had been crying. He asked her what the trouble was and she and Drina told him. After that, nothing would do but that the Ryder and Patterson children must hear the whole story.

"And Jack Bett didn't steal a thing!" concluded Honey Bunch, when she had told them all about the missing boat. "Not a single, solitary thing! And he doesn't want to go to the Snug Sailors' Home till he can make every one believe that he didn't take the things and sell them."

"I don't believe he would steal, either," said Ted Patterson firmly.

"What is a snug sailor?" asked Dora Ryder curiously. "Is Mr. Bett one?"

Mason laughed and Ted frowned.

"Honey Bunch means the Sailors' Snug Harbor," Ted explained impatiently. "It's a home for old sailors. Don't be always laughing at Honey Bunch."

Then the boys, who were already in their bathing suits, went down to the water and the girls put on their suits in the tent that belonged to the Pattersons. As soon as she let a little wave break gently against her feet the very last trace of tears vanished from Honey Bunch's blue eyes.

"Oh, my, isn't it cold!" she gasped.

"Oh, that's because you are not used to it," was the cry from the others. "Come ahead."

"I—I—suppose it won't be so cold after a while," went on Honey Bunch, and then she took a step or two, lost her footing and went down with a splash!

My, what a commotion! Honey Bunch came up spluttering and two of the boys ran towards her and helped her regain her feet.

Her eyes and ears and nose were full of water. She went out on the beach and commenced to cough.

"But I don't care," she said, a minute later. "I used to go in bathing and I'm going in right now."

And she did, and very soon she was enjoying it as much as anybody.

"When," said Aunt Eva Patterson that afternoon as the children were hanging out their wet bathing suits to dry and the three mothers sat on the porch rocking and sewing, "are we going to walk to the other end of the island?"

Mrs. Morton said "to-morrow" so promptly that the other mothers jumped and Honey Bunch beamed upon her approvingly.

"David is off on the cruise," said Mrs. Morton. "Is there any reason why we shouldn't start directly after breakfast and take our lunch with us?"

Well, there wasn't. Honey Bunch's daddy was away for three or four days on a fishing trip with a man who owned a beautiful gray

and white yacht. Mrs. Ryder said the housekeeping could wait, and Mrs. Patterson said it ought to wait in vacation time. So it was settled then and there that every one should be ready at half-past eight the next morning to walk to the other end of Cedar Point Island.

They had often talked of taking this walk. Ted and Drina had been to the other end of the island, but to the rest of the children it would be as new as it would be to Honey Bunch.

Honey Bunch was the first one up the next morning, though Ted and Mason and Herb burst out of their front door a very few minutes later.

"Herb is cross," said Ted, with an older brother's frankness, "because Mother won't let us take Burtis."

"I could carry him, if he gets tired," declared Herb.

"I'll help you," Honey Bunch offered quickly. "I could carry his back legs."

Ted grinned, but shook his head.

"You couldn't lift Burtis, nor you couldn't lift one half of him, Honey Bunch," said Ted decidedly. "He's a very heavy dog. And it wouldn't be any kindness to him to let him go with us on a long, hot walk; he's too old. He'll be a lot happier here on the porch where it is shady and he has his own rug. We'll leave him plenty of water and food and he can keep burglars away."

Honey Bunch had to admit that Burtis made terrible work of walking. If he went with the children even as far as the dock, he had to stop and rest several times before he reached there. And he was so short of breath he wheezed, even when he didn't hurry, and no matter whether it was a cool or a hot day, he panted at the least exertion.

"I guess Burtis would rather stay here, Herb," said Honey Bunch kindly.

So Burtis was left behind, lying on his red and white rug and gazing wistfully after them when the party started soon after breakfast.

The mothers had packed a lunch, and they carried their sewing and knitting bags and a

book to read aloud. But the eight children skipped on ahead and pretended they were explorers, leaping from rock to rock and pulling each other back with shrieks of laughter as a daring wave came closer than they had expected.

"Let's go right to the very tip end, Mother," Mason had urged as they started.

The very tip end of the island, Honey Bunch saw when they reached it, was a long narrow point with the rocks piled high, as though some giant had been playing building blocks and had forgotten to knock down the last pile he made.

The tall cedar trees ran over the rocks, and even appeared to climb some of them. There was a steady, cool breeze blowing off the ocean and for a few minutes every one was content to drop down and feel that delightful wind against a hot face.

"Well, don't ask me to go any farther," said Aunt Isabel Ryder. "This is a perfectly delightful spot. Are you children going wading?"

Yes, they said they were. They wanted to sit on a low rock and hang their bare feet over, which was about the best way to go wading on that rocky shore.

"There's a good little beach further up, Mother," remarked Ted, as he helped her get settled under a tree and handed the knitting and sewing bags to the rightful owners as one by one they sat down in shady places, using a convenient tree as a back-rest.

"Don't go off till after lunch," counseled Ted's mother. "You've a long day before you and plenty of time to do everything you can possibly plan to do."

So Honey Bunch took off her shoes and stockings and sat on a little round rock and watched the tide come in. All around her, on other rocks, perched the other children and they pretended they were shipwrecked sailors, waiting to be rescued.

"But I wouldn't really like to be shipwrecked," said Honey Bunch thoughtfully, drawing up her feet as she felt the cold water lap around her bare ankles.

"I would," declared Herb Patterson. "I wouldn't mind being shipwrecked, but of course I'd want to be rescued."

Before they had a chance to get tired of being shipwrecked sailors, they saw Mrs. Morton's face smiling at them over the edge of the rocky pile.

"Would you care," she said, her eyes twinkling, "to come to lunch? I've heard it said that the stuffed eggs are very fine."

"Hurrah for Mother's stuffed eggs!" Mason Patterson shouted, scrambling immediately toward the shore, and in a few moments they were all seated in a circle around the opened boxes.

Mercy me, how good everything tasted and how they did eat! Mrs. Morton said she thought they really must have been shipwrecked for at least a week, and Mrs. Ryder said that she thought seven sandwiches were enough for any boy.

"We're going to bring you back some dandy shells," Ted Patterson promised, reaching for his eighth sandwich. "A fellow told me you

can get some beautiful specimens at this beach we're going to."

As soon as the picnic lunch was over and the crumbs tossed out on the water for the gulls or the fish to dispose of, the children started for the beach Ted had spoken of. As none of the mothers felt like taking another tramp so soon, they said they would rest themselves for the homeward walk.

"Who said there were shells up here?" asked Mason, as they hopped over the rocks and tried to keep their balance on the sharp edges.

"All the fellows say so," Ted assured him.

He looked back and saw Honey Bunch balancing on a rock. There was a wide gap of water between her and the next rock and she wasn't sure she could make the jump.

"I'll give you a lift," called Ted, and he ran back and with his long strong arms lifted her over safely.

"Take her pick-a-back, Ted," called Drina.

"Take her pick-a-back, Ted," the others took up the cry.

"Up you go," said Ted, and so Honey Bunch rode the rest of the way in state.

They found the "good little beach," as Ted had described it, a lovely place to explore. It was hollowed out between the rocks and covered with the cleanest, whitest sand. The sea gulls had it all to themselves, but they gave up gracefully and flew away when they saw eight eager children march upon the beach and begin to search for shells.

"Over by the rocks," Ted directed. "Joe Abbot told me he found some dandy shells close by the rocks. They sink down and get covered over with sand, but I'll bet we find some."

Sure enough, using clam shells as shovels, Mason and Herb were the first to find a beautifully spotted brown and pink shell. A few minutes later Drina uncovered an almost pure white one.

"I think I see a shell," remarked Honey Bunch, straightening up from digging down one side of a moss-green rock and shading

her eyes with her hand to look at something sticking out of the sand.

"That's a funny shell," Mason, who overheard her, declared. "I'll bet it's some old picnic boxes folks buried instead of leaving it where the tide could take it out."

He and Honey Bunch went over to look at the queer ridges in the sand.

"Say, it's a boat!" cried Mason excitedly. "Ted! Herb! Come and look! Honey Bunch has found a boat!"

Of course it is three times as exciting to dig up an old boat as it is to dig up shells, and the others come running to look.

"Do you suppose somebody drowned and the boat was washed ashore?" asked Betsy Ryder wonderingly.

Honey Bunch was on her knees scooping out sand busily.

"Maybe it was a lifeboat," she said wisely, "and it was wrecked years and years ago, when the people tried to escape from a—from a—steamer like the *Gilroy,*" she finished triumphantly.

"Here's the captain's handkerchief!" she added calmly, pulling out something from under the shifting sand.

The other children stared at her. This *must* be a "shipwrecked boat," if Honey Bunch had found the captain's red and blue handkerchief.

With one accord, they all flung themselves down beside her and went to work, and though they flung a great deal of sand about and got in each other's way, they managed to find two more things that Honey Bunch insisted belonged to "the shipwrecked people."

Drina uncovered an old jackknife with one good blade and one rusty one, and Mason found a key ring with a bunch of rusty keys still attached.

"There's Mother!" said Honey Bunch suddenly.

They looked up and saw, standing on the rocks at a little distance, Mrs. Morton beckoning to them. She pointed to the sky, calling something they did not catch.

"Gee, look at that storm coming!" cried

Ted. "Come on, we've got to hustle or we'll be caught for sure."

He picked up Honey Bunch, who struggled indignantly. She thought she could run as fast as any one. But Ted held her tightly and began to run over the rocks. The others streamed after him while the black clouds in the sky seemed to be spreading out over the whole earth.

CHAPTER XIV

AFTER THE STORM

THE three mothers had gathered up their sewing bags and the pillows they had brought with them. By the time the children reached them, they were ready to join the race toward home.

"You can't carry Honey Bunch, Ted," protested Mrs. Morton. "Put her down and take hold of her hand to help her over the rocks. You'll both get along faster that way."

Ted was out of breath, for Honey Bunch was a pretty solid little girl to carry any distance. Besides, Ted had run most of the way.

"We'll get home before it rains," said Drina confidently.

She was rather quiet, this "middy-blouse girl," but her brothers thought she was a good weather prophet. Her sailor collar was

blowing over her head now, but Drina didn't care.

"This is only the wind," she explained to the others, as they hurried ahead, jumping and slipping from one rock to another.

Suddenly Honey Bunch remembered her daddy.

"Will it do anything to Daddy's boat?" she inquired anxiously. "Drina, will it blow the boat over?"

"Mercy, no!" answered Drina, quite as if such a question surprised her. "Mr. Wood's captain will put into some shore resort and they'll wait there till the storm is over. For all I know, they may not be caught in it at all, but I kind of think this is sweeping the entire coast."

Honey Bunch looked at her respectfully. It must be wonderful to know so much about storms!

The black clouds seemed to come lower and lower and a really tremendous gale was coming in from the ocean. The angry white

caps covered the water and the waves were breaking against the rocks with great force, the spray dashing high into the air.

"Good old Burtis will be glad to see us back," shouted Ted. He had to shout to make himself heard.

"I'll light a fire in the fireplace," said Mrs. Ryder. "You and Honey Bunch must come and stay with us to-night, Edith; you don't want to spend the night alone when it's storming."

They came in sight of the bungalows just as the first cold "spat-spat" of rain struck their faces. The old dog rose stiffly as he caught sight of them and yawned as he wagged his tail.

"Going to rain, Burtis," said Mason, putting his arms around the shaggy neck. "It's a good thing we didn't take you on the picnic, for you wouldn't be home yet."

"Say, he never could have hurried against that wind, could he?" Herb said thoughtfully.

Honey Bunch, too, was glad Burtis had been left at home—he would have had hard work to get back.

After some persuasion, Mrs. Morton promised that she and Honey Bunch would come over to the Ryder bungalow to sleep. But she said she wanted to get supper for them all in her own kitchen—it was her turn, she insisted.

Just as they were sitting down at the table there was a knock at the door and Ted answered it. A boy in dripping oilskins stood holding out a telegram.

"Can't come in—I'll drip on the floor," he said hoarsely. "This is for Mrs. Morton. Came half an hour ago, but I had to make two other stops."

"Come in and drip," urged Honey Bunch hospitably, while her mother hastily opened the envelope.

"Yes, come in and drip," said Mrs. Morton, looking up from the sheet of paper with shining eyes. "Have a hot biscuit and some melted maple sugar, Tommy."

"Well, I am kind of hungry," admitted the boy, who was the son of the postmaster.

Honey Bunch heard Mrs. Patterson laugh.

"You wanted to stay here and get supper because you thought David might send a message," said Mrs. Patterson.

Mrs. Morton was buttering a fluffy hot biscuit for the dripping Tommy, who stood neatly in a corner.

"Honey Bunch," her mother said softly as she handed her the biscuit on a plate, "that's for Tommy. He brought us a message from Daddy. The yacht has put into Stonelake Harbor and will stay there till the storm is over."

Honey Bunch gave Tommy his biscuit. She was glad to know that her daddy was not tossing about on the ocean on a night like this. The wind howled down the chimney and presently when Tommy, having eaten his biscuit and taken a huge slice of cake to eat on his way home, opened the door, the wind seemed to fill the room. It took Ted and Mason and Herb to close the door after him.

Though the Ryder bungalow was next door, it was something of an adventure to get there, after the supper things were put away. Honey Bunch was startled at the booming of the sea—she had never heard it make such a loud, angry noise.

Ted had dashed ahead and stood holding open the front door while the others ran from the Morton bungalow, down the short path and up the other path and the two front steps and from there plunged into the hall.

There was a fine fire blazing in the hall fireplace—it really wasn't a hall, but a living room—and when they were all safely inside and the door closed it was very cozy. Honey Bunch thought it was a pity the Pattersons had to go home to sleep in their own bungalow, but she admitted that Mrs. Ryder might have been puzzled to know where to put eleven people to sleep in two bedrooms.

After Dora and Honey Bunch had played two games of tit-tat-toe, bed time was declared and Ted and Drina and Mason and

Herb and Aunt Eva Patterson scurried next door "before we can be drowned," said Ted, as he put his arm around his mother to help her down the steps.

Honey Bunch found that she was to sleep in the room with Betsy, Kate, and Dora, and her mother was to sleep with Aunt Isabel Ryder.

"Isn't this fun?" cried Dora, as she saw the four little cots in the middle of the room.

Honey Bunch thought it was fun, too, and the little girls planned to "talk ever so long" as soon as they were in bed and the light was out. But they didn't know how tired they were after their long walk, and before they had said ten words they were fast asleep.

Once in the night Honey Bunch woke up to hear the two windows in the room rattling in the wind. The rain was dashing furiously against the panes and she wondered sleepily whether rain ever broke window glass. Then she went to sleep again and it was Betsy who woke her next.

"It's morning," Betsy was saying. "It's morning, but you just ought to see the ocean!"

Honey Bunch hurried over to the window. The ocean was gray, with not a trace of the beautiful blue she loved. But, oh, how foamy and angry-looking the water was that dashed high above the rocks! As Honey Bunch and Betsy looked, three men in oil-skins went past, holding fast to each other, like links in a chain.

"That's so they won't blow away," said Betsy.

Dora and Kate were awake now and they came to see what the storm was doing.

"It might blow away the bungalow," remarked Honey Bunch uneasily.

The others started to laugh, but just then a great gust of wind seemed to dash straight at the house. The window panes rattled and Dora jumped.

"Let's get dressed and go to the kitchen," she suggested.

And that is where they stayed most of the

time for that day and the next. The rain and the wind continued steadily, and though Ted and Drina ran down to the shore line to see how the world looked from there, the younger children had to be contented to stay in the house and play games and make candy.

Perhaps every one wasn't glad to wake up after two stormy days and find the sunshine flooding the island! The children were so excited they could hardly eat their breakfast and Aunt Eva Patterson said the way they acted, she would suppose they had been shut up for a week at least.

"Let's go down to the beach and see what has been washed up," suggested Mason.

As soon as breakfast was over, down to the beach they all went, Burtis tagging heavily after them. Honey Bunch walked with him and some little distance behind the others—she often thought that Burtis' feelings must be hurt when no one walked slowly with him.

If Mason hoped to find anything very wonderful, he was disappointed. There was a great deal of driftwood, and they gathered

a pile of that to burn in the fireplaces. And there were some dead fish and a few shells, but that was all. So, being sensible children, they all went bathing and stayed close to the shore, for the water was still rough.

In a few more days the sea was as calm as blue glass. The sand was dry and white again on the bathing beach and the rocks were hot to the touch of bare feet as they had been before the storm. Mr. Morton was safely home by this time and he told them that a ship had been wrecked near Stonelake Harbor and he had seen the life-saving crew work all night, bringing people ashore.

"If we had a boat, we could play life-saving," said Mason, one bright morning.

He and Honey Bunch were down on the bathing beach, waiting for the others who had gone to see the *Gilroy* come in and to ask for mail.

"But we haven't a boat," said the practical Honey Bunch.

Something made a crunching noise behind her and she turned suddenly.

"I meant to surprise you," declared Jack Bett, smiling down at her. "I stepped on a clam shell and it cracked and spoiled things."

The old sailor looked warm and tired, Honey Bunch thought.

"This is Mason Patterson, Mr. Bett," she said politely. Then added quickly: "Did you find your boat?"

"Never did," sighed the old sailor. "And I guess after that storm we just had, I'm not the only one who's lost a boat."

"I was wishing for a boat so we could play life-saving," Mason explained wistfully.

"What would you do for shipwrecked passengers?" asked the sailor, smiling.

"We've got some things that belonged to shipwrecked people," Mason said eagerly. "Honey Bunch says they must have been shipwrecked, and I guess they were. Here's the handkerchief Honey Bunch found and the key ring I found. My sister Drina found this old knife—she gave it to me."

To their astonishment, the old sailor snatched the knife and key ring from Mason's

hand. The handkerchief dropped to the sand.

"Where did you get these?" he asked in a queer voice. "Where did you find 'em? Tide wash 'em up to you?"

Mason was too surprised to answer, so Honey Bunch had to explain.

"We found them in the sand," she said. "Under an old boat. That's why I said the people who owned them must have been shipwrecked."

The old sailor's hands were shaking as he picked up the handkerchief and tried to fold it.

"Can you show me *where* you found them?" he asked eagerly. "Can you remember where you found the old boat?"

"Ye-es, I think so," stammered Honey Bunch. "What—what's the matter?"

The old man looked at her strangely.

"Maybe that was *my* boat," he said. "Those things were in my reefer pocket."

CHAPTER XV

HONEY BUNCH IS PLEASED

HONEY BUNCH always bounced when something pleased her very much. Now she bounced, not once, but twice, and she grabbed Mason by the hand and tried to pull him along.

"Hurry!" she urged. "Mason, hurry up! We have to show Mr. Bett where the boat is."

"Wait a minute," the old sailor said, rubbing his forehead as though he were trying to think.

"I have to go and tell Miss Georgie that I won't be able to take her over to Star Island this morning. No, I won't be able to go and she's expecting me. Miss Georgie won't put foot in a boat that has an engine—always goes with me in a rowboat, she does. Thinks it's safer."

"Well, you go tell her," said Mason

briskly, "and we'll get the rest of us. Ted and Drina will be tickled if it really is your boat."

The old sailor hurried off in the direction of the bungalows and Honey Bunch and Mason ran down toward the dock. Before they reached it, they saw Ted and Drina and the four younger children walking along the shore.

"Ted!" called Honey Bunch. "Drina, what do you think?"

"What?" shouted Ted, who, as his mother often remarked, had "good lungs."

"It's Mr. Bett!" cried Honey Bunch breathlessly. "I mean the key ring and the jackknife belong to Mr. Bett. They were in his pocket. So that old boat is his boat."

"The handkerchief is his, too," Mason added.

Those coming from the boat landing crowded around Honey Bunch, not yet understanding what she was trying to tell them. As soon as they found out that there was a possibility the old boat at the other end of

the island might be the boat Jack Bett had lost, they were as excited as Honey Bunch and Mason.

"Why, perhaps the things he lost are there, too!" exclaimed Betsy Ryder, her eyes as large as two brown saucers.

"Hurry!" Honey Bunch began again. "Let's hurry! He's gone to tell somebody who won't put foot in a boat with an engine, but he's coming right back."

Drina laughed and knelt down to tie Honey Bunch's little tan shoe.

"You're so excited you can't talk straight and your shoes are coming off," teased Ted. "Who won't put foot in a boat with an engine?"

Honey Bunch explained about Miss Georgia as they hurried up the shore. In a few moments they saw the old sailor, standing like a statue, waiting for them to catch up with him.

"I got to thinking maybe you couldn't remember where you saw the boat," he said a little anxiously.

"It's up at the other end of the island," Ted answered. "On what they call Second Beach. We were all up there for the day just before the big storm."

"I know where you mean," said Jack Bett. "Likely as not the storm has drifted the sand. Well, let's go try our luck. If I could find those val-u-ables I'd be the happiest man in seven counties."

The old sailor and Ted could take the longest steps and the others had to run part of the way, in order to keep up with them. But they were all so eager to find the boat and so hopeful that it might really be the missing boat that though the sun was hot no one complained of heat or weariness.

"Here's the place where we had our lunch," said Ted, when at last they came to the rocky point where the cedar trees grew so large and thickly. "Second Beach is just ahead."

"Yes, I know," and Jack Bett nodded, staring ahead and walking as fast as his stiff old knees would let him.

"Why," said Honey Bunch, in utter astonishment, as they climbed over the rocks and saw the sandy beach stretched out before them, "it doesn't look the same!"

The beach didn't look the same. For one thing, it was swept perfectly clean in spots, and in others strewn with driftwood. Evidently, no one had visited it since the storm.

"The boat's gone!" gasped Honey Bunch, standing still and staring.

"Yes, it's gone," Mason echoed.

"I was afraid of that," murmured the old sailor.

"It couldn't float," Ted argued. "It was all stove in and it couldn't float a minute in any depth of water."

"It's buried—that's what's happened to it," said the sailor. "Buried out of sight. But we won't give up. Can't you remember about where you saw it?"

Ted looked around hopelessly and Drina began to poke in the sand with a stick.

"Just look how the sand has drifted!" she

exclaimed. "The tide must have brought it in by the wagonload."

Honey Bunch was trying to think.

"It was near where we found the shells," she said slowly. "Don't you remember, we thought the boat was a shell sticking out of the sand at first?"

Yes, they remembered that.

"Well, we found the shells over by the rocks," went on Honey Bunch.

Jack Bett walked quickly over to the rocks and Honey Bunch trotted after him.

"I think I walked over to here," she said, marching in a straight line from the rocks to a spot about three yards away.

The old sailor began to dig in the sand, using a heavy board he had picked up. Immediately each of the children seized a board —the beach at this point was littered with wreckage—and began to dig.

"Guess we're out of luck," said Ted, after several minutes of hard work.

"I struck something!" Honey Bunch cried. "I felt it! Right here!"

"I STRUCK SOMETHING!" HONEY BUNCH CRIED.

"Bet it's a shell," said Herb Patterson gloomily.

"Let me try," the old sailor suggested.

He began to dig, scooping up great heaps of the sand.

"I see it!" screamed Mason, and Honey Bunch bounced with delight as the silver-gray hull of an old boat showed above the dry, loose sand.

"Is it your boat, Mr. Bett?" asked Honey Bunch, dancing around like a happy fairy. "Is it your boat?"

"That's my boat," the old sailor said solemnly. "There's the chip I nicked out of her testing my knife when it was new. I'd know this boat if I found it in China."

The children tried to help him dig, expecting any moment to uncover the teaspoons and the gold beads and the neckties and socks and other "val-u-ables."

But when they had loosened and removed enough sand so that Jack Bett could turn the boat over, it was empty!

"Somebody must have stolen the teaspoons

and beads!" sighed Honey Bunch, in great disappointment.

"Not so," Jack Bett assured her. "We'll dig some more. My bones tell me there may be something buried in the sand."

"Mrs. Miller's bones tell her things, too," said Honey Bunch, much comforted. "Come on, girls, let's dig."

They all dug. Beavers, declared Ted, couldn't dig faster than they did. It was Drina who first found a little box.

"The gold beads!" said Jack Bett, and his voice shook. "The address is worn off, but I know what's inside—the little gold beads Mrs. George sent away to have restrung."

The children stared in fascinated amazement at the little box with the ink on the label so blurred from sea-water and rain that no one could read it.

Then, with one accord, they all began to dig faster than ever.

At the end of an hour they had found the box of solid silver teaspoons; five books, with

the wrappings torn and faded but still waterproof, Jack Bett said; the packages of neckties and socks—in fact, everything that had been lost.

Honey Bunch mopped her flushed face with a tiny blue handkerchief.

"Isn't it lovely!" she sighed happily.

"I'm the most thankful man on this island," declared the old sailor seriously. "Now I can look folks in the face again. I can—I can——"

"—go to the Snug Sailors' Home when you want to," said the helpful Honey Bunch, who never could remember the name of that home.

"Yes, I can do that, too," Jack Bett agreed, smiling. "But as soon as I get these things to their owners, I want to have a picnic. I'd like to take you kids over to Star Island where they have a summer circus."

"All of us?" asked Mason hopefully.

"Every last one of you," the old sailor answered.

"Well, we have to go home week after next," said Honey Bunch.

"We'll have the picnic before you go," the sailor promised. "I'll see your mothers and do everything shipshape, and we'll have a regular day of it."

Jack Bett didn't forget. The children helped him carry the packages back to his boat, which he had left tied at the dock, and he spent the rest of the day making what he called his "over-due voyage." The people who owned the teaspoons and the gold beads and the other things were delighted to have them, of course, and every one on Cedar Point Island was glad that they had been found. Nearly every one had heard the story of the lost boat and every one knew how unhappy the loss had made the honest old sailor.

The week before Honey Bunch and her daddy and mother left the island, Jack Betts gave his party. He asked all the grown-ups, too, and as he couldn't possibly take so many in a rowboat, he borrowed a sloop from a

sailor friend and gave his guests a long, beautiful sail to Star Island.

The mothers had wanted to bring lunch, but he wouldn't hear of that and as he seemed hurt at the suggestion, they did not insist.

"My brother cooks on the circus grounds," he explained.

So Honey Bunch ate her dinner out under the trees on Star Island before the circus began, and Jack Bett's brother—who looked exactly like him—waited on them and beamed on them because he was so glad the missing boat had been found.

The circus was in the afternoon, and it was great fun. Honey Bunch whispered to her daddy that she wished Norman Clark could be there, and Mr. Morton whispered back asking why Bertram Olds had not come.

"I thought you told me you asked Jack Bett whether you might invite him, and that he said 'yes,' " whispered Mr. Morton.

"Well, I thought Bertram would feel lonely if he saw us all going," Honey Bunch answered, "and Mr. Bett said he'd be hon-

ored to have him, 'cause he's a friend of mine. And I asked Bertram and he wanted to come. Then, yesterday, he said he wouldn't go to the store when his mother asked him to so he can't go out of the house to-day."

"Stop whispering, you two," said Aunt Isabel Ryder, with a smile, "and watch the horse dance."

And Honey Bunch, watching the pretty black horse keep time to the music, was reminded of the gold beads because of the gold collar the horse wore. Thinking of the beads reminded her of the boat they had found for Jack Bett on Cedar Point Island and of the good time she was having this minute on Star Island.

"I guess," whispered Honey Bunch to her daddy, "I like *all* islands!"

THE END

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